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Style pg 24

Fashion stunners and duds of 2009

ED ANDRIESKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Richard and Mayumi Heene.

Parents of Balloon Boy get jail time

COURT The parents who pulled the Balloon Boy hoax in hopes of landing a reality TV show were sentenced to jail Wednesday — 90 days for him, 20 days for her — and barred from profiting from their newfound celebrity status for four years.

The prosecutor asked that Richard Heene and his wife, Mayumi, be forced to reimburse authorities for the cost of chasing the balloon and investigating the hoax. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 10

Flames **Stonewalled**

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

St. Louis Blues goalie Chris Mason stops a shot from the Calgary Flames' Olli Jokinen during second-period NHL hockey action in Calgary Wednesday. The Blues beat the Flames 2-1. Story, page 18.

News on the Move

What's this barcode for?
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

Celebrity Buzz pg 34

Drugs behind Murphy's death?

Metro

Look for our special Boxing Day issue Saturday. We will resume publishing Monday, Jan. 4.

On the web

Visit metronews.ca for news updates

People fleeing Alberta

StatsCan estimate shows loss in inter-provincial migration

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

Saddled with dwindling employment and shrinking energy prices, Alberta seems to be losing its status as the promised land for job-seekers from across Canada.

For more than a decade, the province's resource-rich economy has drawn in hundreds of thousands of people from Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and elsewhere.

But Statistics Canada's third-quarter population estimate for 2009 shows more people left Alberta for other provinces than moved in.

That's the first time that has happened since 1994.

Calgarian Jolene Doan said she wasn't surprised to hear the latest numbers — she is moving this week to Kelowna, B.C., because she can't afford to live in the city anymore.

"I think the cost of living is too high and I don't even feel like I'm really living my life here because of it. It's a never-ending cycle," she said.

Douglas Porter, deputy chief economist with the Bank of Montreal, said the province was pulling in almost 50,000 people a year from other provinces at the height of the energy boom.

"It is an amazing turnaround from as recently as three years ago when, on average, we were seeing about 12,000 or 13,000 net new migrants (per quarter) into Alberta from the rest of the country," he said Wednesday.

The culprit is probably a rising unemployment rate that's the result of tumbling energy prices, Porter said.

Todd Hirsch, a senior economist with ATB Financial, told Metro the change is a logical result of a recession that could have left many people who came to the province from elsewhere suddenly unemployed.

"Because a lot Alberta's labour force came from other provinces for work, it's logical they may return home if they were out of work," he said.

"It's actually very surprising it didn't happen until the third-quarter."

Hirsch said it's normal for the population numbers to fluctuate and he expects Alberta will be back on track when the economy gets better.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

5 youths charged after cab stolen

CRIME For the second time in less than a month, a cab driver has had his vehicle stolen in Edmonton.

At about 1 a.m. Wednesday, a group of five males, one as young as 12, are believed to have gotten out of a truck and approached a parked cab.

When the cab driver opened his door to speak to the group, they allegedly demanded cash.

The driver ran away from the vehicle and the five males allegedly drove off in the cab.

Police spotted the stolen cab and followed it until an Air-1 helicopter took over. A spike belt was deployed, sending the vehicle off the road and into a light standard.

Four of the five suspects allegedly fled the scene but were arrested shortly after. A fifth male remained in the car with a leg injury and was taken to hospital for treatment.

"Sometimes, especially in the cold weather, people take chances and leave their vehicle running and unlocked and they come back and see that their vehicle is gone," said police spokesperson Karen Carlson.

"In many of those cases, it's a crime of opportunity."

Further investigation revealed that the truck the group was driving was stolen as well.

Five males aged 12, 15, 16, 17 and 19 face several charges. ANDREAS MORSE/ FOR METRO CANADA

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Local

Aldermen's wish lists

Wanna know what your alderman wants for Christmas? Ward 3 Ald. Jim Stevenson got his present a little early, with his birthday on Dec. 19. Santa brought Stevenson a nice flat screen TV and Blu-ray player, while Ward 9 Ald. Joe Ceci is anxiously waiting to see if Santa brings a framed painting of Bob Dylan, done by John Langford. THE CANADIAN PRESS

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2009 Festival of Media Awards

Calgary tweets

- @thefictionalist The heater on the bus (won't work at all) x3, the heater on the bus won't work at all, so we're all turning blue. #yyc
- @stephenHUBBARD Excited about a potential photography project. Hopefully it'll help get my name out in the #Calgary area. Details to come. #fb
- @lipsh Calgary police helicopter caused 500 extra arrests, so Winnipeg is buying one too. GPS system will hone in on crime scene any where in city
- @scrapbooknow Hey everyone.....still COLD in Calgary but the SUN IS INCREDIBLE !!!! Hope you're having a wonderful week leading up to CHRISTMAS!!!!

metronews.ca WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video The Canadian Press names Stephen Harper its Newsmaker of the Year at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49: 1, 5, 9, 11, 22 & 38. Bonus 27.
These results are not official.

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Going home for the holidays

Financial strain has many trying to travel shorter distances

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

ROBIN KUNISKI/METRO CALGARY

Latonia Hartery, from Newfoundland, is heading to spend the holidays with family in Fort McMurray and can't wait to relax after a long semester of studies.

Home for the holidays means something a little bit different for a few Calgarians this year.

While some people fly as far away from the city as they can, this year some travellers, like Latonia Hartery, are sticking closer to home because of the tough economy.

"My parents moved to Fort McMurray, so I am actually glad, because otherwise I wouldn't have got to spend time with them," she said, adding she wouldn't have been able to afford to fly home to Newfoundland.

"So it's what you make it and I am actually happy I am not going too far. It'll be nice to spend time with my family and not have to travel so far and spend so much to get there."

Others, like James and Amanda Collins, decided they would travel to Grand Prairie to spend the holidays for less.

"We have some friends there and thought it was a lot cheaper than going somewhere more exotic or farther," they said.

But one 19-year-old, Stephanie Hill, chose to stay in Calgary alone while her dad went to California with her brother, her mom to Medicine Hat and her sister to New Zealand.

"I was sad at first but now I am excited to just kind of do my own thing," she said, adding her family was "just doing their own thing" this year.

Boy, 7, getting the gift of mobility this Christmas

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

"I just want my son to be able to get around. If he is tired he has no choice but to use his arms. He's only seven."
Amanda McNeil

A Calgary mother and her son were given an early Christmas gift that will change their lives.

Amanda McNeil and her seven-year-old son, Joey Rehberg, were in a car accident in 2005 that left Joey in a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

McNeil could not afford a motorized wheelchair, but was concerned about her young son being forced to constantly use his own strength to get around. She began a desperate search for a proper wheelchair.

"I just want my son to be able to get around. If he is tired he has no choice but to use his arms. He's only seven," she said.

MediChair Calgary immediately pledged to help McNeil and her son when she called the organization last week and just Wednesday she received the motorized chair to let her son open Christmas Day.

"This has changed our lives and will definitely be the best thing that has happened to him since the accident. It's amazing what they did for us; I can't express how grateful we are."

On behalf of MediChair, Dave Thompson said the organization believes in quality over quantity.

"We knew the situation and we really just try to do as much as we can to help out," he said.

m.metronews.ca

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CALGARY OBITUARIES

CalgaryObits.com notes the following deaths in our community:

ANTONIO, Isabel
AYER, Mary Louise
BUSSOLI, Francesco Paolo
CLOAREC, Francine Marie
ERSKINE, Jessie "Jean"
GORBOUS, Michael
HAMILTON, William (Douglas)
KERR, Valerie Joyce
MAHER, Naida Anne
MCGRATH, Thomas Joseph
MCNAUGHTAN, John
MOFFAT, Walter (Wally) Lyle
NAIKER, Murgappa
OLIVOS, Rodrigo Javier
POSTOLOSKI, Rhona
RAHILLY, Donald Hugh
RAMJI, Farida Musa
RICHARDSON, Dora Viola (nee Hendrickson)
ROTHERY, Ian M.P.
SAMPSON, Alton Conway
SEIB, Eva (nee Petrowicz)
SOMERS, Kenneth (Ken) Gordon
SOMERS, Kenneth (Ken) Gordon
STEVENSON, Doris White
THACKER, John Lawrence
THIBEAULT, Simon
THOBANI , Zubeida Madatally

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Counterfeit U.S. currency circulating
Airdrie RCMP want businesses in the area to know they have received several reports of counterfeit American currency of various denominations in the area. Anyone with information is asked to call 403-945-7200. METRO CALGARY

Calgary police to retrieve sex offender in B.C.

NON-COMPLIANCE Calgary police will be headed to Kelowna, B.C., to track the movements of a violent sex offender, who was being sought in the city for allegedly failing to comply with his release conditions.

Dean Robert Zimmerman was arrested in Abbotsford, B.C., on Dec 7 after a three-month search.

Police want to speak with anyone who may have come into contact with Zimmerman.

METRO CALGARY

News in brief

CORRECTION In Wednesday's paper, Metro printed the wrong name of TELUS vice-president of human resources in the "Santa trades in reindeer for a jet" story. It should have been Josh Blair, not Josh Blaine. Metro regrets the error.

Follow Metro on Twitter for news updates and more: @metrocalgary

'It's just amazing to see how Calgarians respond'

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

On the last day of Christmas, the Country Hills Toyota gave four Tundra's full, three weeks of hauling, two elves packing and a FJ Cruiser extra load of food to the food bank.

Energy 101.5 and Country Hills Toyota teamed up to bring several truckloads of food to the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank, according to station Goodwill ambassador Carlos Cuevas.

"I think this really shows how giving Calgarians are, especially with the economy, and how willing they are to help out others in need," he said.

Cuevas spent three weeks picking up donations from school, large corporations, individuals and groups, even hauling in a $2,000 anonymous donation worth of Costco food.

"It's just amazing to see how Calgarians respond, time and time again."

ROBIN KUNKSY/FOR METRO CALGARY

General sales manager Farid Shivji, Ian MacKinnon, assistant general manager Farlee Frunchak, Zack Hewitt and Carlos Cuevas from 101.5 Energy FM gather around three Toyota Tundras filled with food collected for the Faith Food Bank during the I Care Food Drive Wrap Up.

Country Hills Toyota managers Farid Shivji and Farlee Frunchak said they jumped at the opportunity to help out others and the whole staff jumped on board.

"We believe nobody should have to go hungry and everybody here just wanted to do our part and we would do it again next year, same time, same place," they said.

Last year Energy 101.5 raised $10,000 in food and cash donations and said this year would exceed that goal, promotions coordinator Tricia Kindleman said.

H1N1 clinics to reopen after holidays

Flu Outbreak

FLU Alberta Health Services has deemed demand for H1N1 vaccinations is strong enough to re-open three mass clinics for six days after the holidays.

The clinics, Avenida Village, Brentwood Village Mall and Whitehorn, will open at noon on Jan. 4 and be open from Jan. 4 to 7 from noon to 7 p.m. and then Jan. 8 and 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The AHS said interest in the vaccine remains steady. Long lines formed this week at all of the mass vaccination clinics in the city, as the AHS had earlier indicated the clinics would be closing at the end of the day on Dec. 23.

The AHS said further possible clinic dates would be announced based on public demand and any details concerning vaccine availability at Community Health Clinics will be posted on the AHS website, albertahealthservices.com

METRO CALGARY

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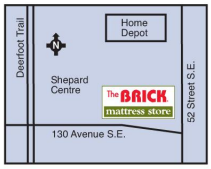

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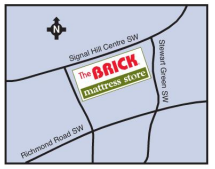

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Judge tells plaintiff to disclose Facebook usage

A New Brunswick judge has ordered a Miramichi, N.B., woman — who said she hasn't been able to return to work full-time — to reveal how often she uses Facebook to a man she's suing after a 2004 car crash, CBC News Online reported. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canada

Avalanche surviver one year later

Jeff Adams, left, barely survived being buried beneath waves of snow last December in a thundering series of avalanches that ripped him from his snowmobile and entombed eight of his closest friends. A year later, what haunts him most is the questions he'll one day face from their children. "The biggest thing is those kids ... will never know their dads except for from pictures and stories from friends," said the 30-year-old. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Weather key to Games

Organizers preparing for unpredictable Mother Nature

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

VANCOUVER Olympic organizers want a fairytale experience for the 2010 Winter Games, so the weather they need is what Goldilocks wanted from the three bears' porridge.

It can't be too hot, it can't be too cold. It needs to be just right.

"The weather for us has always been one of our major concerns in sport, it obviously affects our field of play and so anything that affects that is always a concern," said Tim Gayda, vice-president of sports for the Vancouver Olympic organizing committee, in a recent interview.

"We took the weather into consideration way back even in the bid phase, about how we go about planning where the venues are (and) how we schedule the competitions, so the weather is pretty much at the forefront of our minds from years ago."

Too much huffing and puffing from Mother Nature in 2010 could blow the entire Olympic system down.

Adverse weather that forces the delay of an event impacts staff, volunteers, spectators, security, transportation and of course, the athletes.

It could also put a damper on the vision of Vancouver that officials need to help lure tourists back after the Games.

While red mittens might be the appropriate souvenir up in the crisp, snow-capped mountains of Whistler, B.C., the more practical souvenir for Vancouver itself might be the official Olympic umbrella.

On the dates the Games are being held, there's been an average of eight days with no precipitation at all over the last six years.

"The rain has never stopped Vancouver from doing anything, so if we can't play in the rain, we can't do anything so we learned to adjust to it and work with it," said Paul Welsh, general manager of Edelman Vancouver, a communications firm handling marketing for several Olympic-related events and sponsors.

"It could be a shocker if you're not from around here."

There are dozens of outdoor events planned around the Games and planners have been mindful that rain could ruin the fun.

Wary that rain could transform one of the city's sites into a mud hole, Vancouver officials found flooring made from old tires to cover an entire park.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Delays

- Only a few Winter Olympics have been pulled off with no weather delays at all, the most recent being the Lillehammer Games in 1994.

Nova Scotia **Surfing in December**

ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A surfer rides a stand up paddle board on waves at Cow Bay, N.S., near Halifax on Wednesday. The Nova Scotia coast attracts a hardcore group of surfers year round.

Police shoot man with machete

HOSPITALIZED A Quebec man who approached a provincial police officer with a machete is in hospital after the officer shot him in the shoulder.

The shooting occurred in St. Lin, Que., a community in the Laurentians about 30 kilometres north of Montreal. Provincial police say the man was still raging when he arrived at the hospital. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Afghan pullout day looming

TROOPS Canada is heading into what is supposed to be its last full year of combat in Kandahar, just as the U.S. pours thousands more troops into the embattled province in what experts believe will be the ultimate showdown with the Taliban.

The increased fighting is expected to unfold against a backdrop of a widening political controversy in Ottawa over the alleged torture of Afghan prisoners early in the war, what the Conservative government knew about it, and what it did to stop it.

There is no denying 2010 will be the watershed year in the eight-year-old Afghan conflict.

NATO's top commander and architect of the rebooted war strategy said recently it will be the end of 2010 before the allies know if they are winning or losing.

The Conservative government and war-weary Canadians will have a choice to make whether they like it or not: Stick to the country's self-imposed 2011 withdrawal date and perhaps risk alienating the Obama administration; continue with the reconstituted war effort; find some other way to remain meaningfully involved?

Everyone from Prime Minister Stephen Harper on down has taken pains to emphasize that the strategy is to remain involved, but out of combat. It's a position critics question, given Kandahar's tenuous security.

U.S. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, who commands the International Security Assistance Force, boldly predicted that by July 2011 NATO will be able to turn to the Afghans and declare that the Taliban "will not win."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

6,000 There are 6,000 Canadian, U.S. and Afghan combat troops in Kandahar province and a Washington-based think-tank estimated last fall as many as 15,800 more would be needed to stem the insurgent tide.

White Christmas likely for most of Canada

WEATHER Most of Canada will see a white Christmas.

But Environment Canada's senior climatologist David Phillips adds about one-quarter of Canadians will see a green Christmas.

He says areas that won't have at least two centimetres of snow on the ground Christmas morning are Vancouver Island, southern B.C., southern Ontario areas including Windsor, Niagara, London, Kitchener, Hamilton, Toronto and along the north shore of Lake Erie, as well as St. John's, N.L.

Phillips says Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island may be getting some snow Wednesday and Thursday but also some rain, so it's a question of whether they get that 2 cm or not — although he thinks they won't have a white Christmas.

He says northern and central B.C., all of the Prairies, northern and central and eastern Ontario, all of Quebec, New Brunswick, most of Newfoundland and Labrador, and all of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon will have a white Christmas.

Phillips says among Canada's major cities, Ottawa, which currently has 32 cm on the ground, will have the whitest Christmas while Whistler, B.C., will be the resort with the most snow, with the current measurement at 247 cm. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Gordie Howe, 'Pinball' Clemons carry torch

Hockey great Gordie Howe took a turn carrying the Olympic torch today in southwestern Ontario, in the community of Lasalle. Earlier, CFL legend Mike (Pinball) Clemons carried the Olympic flame through the village of North Buxton. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tippett guilty on all counts

Dad of five convicted of kidnapping, sexually assaulting girl

A married father of five was found guilty yesterday of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a 12-year-old Peterborough, Ont., girl.

Stanley Tippett, 33, was arrested Aug. 6, 2008 after the girl was found half-naked behind a school in Courtice, some 70 kilometres from Peterborough.

Ontario Superior Court Justice Bruce Glass found Tippett guilty of all seven counts he was facing, including kidnapping, sexual assault and sexual interference.

Tippett had testified that he came across a group of young drunken girls in south-end Peterborough and that two of them, including the 12 year old, got into his van.

He told the court that minutes after dropping off the older girl he was carjacked by two men at gunpoint and ditched in the country.

The Crown argued that there was no truth in Tippett's testimony about the carjackers.

Outside the court the girl's grandmother said she was "more than happy with the verdict. "At least this way maybe he can't hurt another child," she said.

Const. Robbie Harding, with Durham Regional Police, testified during the trial that he responded to a call at the high school after receiving reports of screams and crying in a wooded area.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

THE CANADIAN PRESS/PETER REDMAN

Tippett arrives at court.

Harper named top newsmaker

SURVEY Stephen Harper began the year facing crater-sized political potholes at home, so he adopted a time-honoured coping mechanism of Canadian prime ministers: He hit the road internationally.

New York, China, India, South Korea — all were ports of call aimed at burnishing Harper's image at home as a trusted economic helmsman in a time of unprecedented financial uncertainty.

Harper

The strategy, it seems, worked like a charm: Harper used a steep recession to his political advantage and emerged stronger than ever in his four years in office, a feat that has earned him the title of 2009 Newsmaker of the Year in the annual survey of news organizations by The Canadian Press.

"His personal forays onto the international stage and his surprising positions on major issues such as climate change are criticized, but he sticks to his guns," said Maurice Cloutier, managing editor of Sherbrooke's La Tribune. "Mr. Harper seems to have won his bet that Canadians are less concerned with Canada's image abroad, and more so with more personal interests in issues such as the economy and public security."

It's Harper's second straight year as top newsmaker. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Government mulls new term for 'multiculturalism'

WORDS Jason Kenney is the federal minister in charge of Canada's multiculturalism. But for the last couple of years, he's been wondering whether "pluralism" might be a better word to describe this country's cultural diversity.

"We need a term that has a deeper meaning."
Jason Kenney, multiculturalism minister

And so have government officials, according to documents obtained by the Toronto Star.

"What if the picture we have of ourselves shifted Canada as a multicultural society to Canada as a pluralistic society?" is the question posed in a series of slides prepared for a September 2008 discussion within government.

"Would it change the way we design policy and programs? Would the notion of Canadian identity change?"

In Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Canada, where blue is the new red, and much attention is paid to symbols and logos, word choice is significant.

And with Kenney's recent rollout of a new citizenship study guide, it is also obvious that the Conservative government has been doing some serious thinking about how to update and describe the Canadian national identity.

"Multiculturalism says to a lot of people 'kiosks at folk fests,'" Kenney says.

"We need a term that has a deeper meaning; that talks about the deeply different world views or belief systems that people have, and I thought pluralism perhaps speaks more to that."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Boys charged with murder

CRIME Two 14-year-old boys have been charged with second-degree murder in the death of a 36-year-old man in northern Alberta.

RCMP say Hector Cardinal of Lac La Biche died of blunt force trauma stemming from an alleged altercation in the community on Monday.

One of the young suspects was arrested Tuesday evening and will appear in a Lac La Biche courtroom Jan. 4.

A warrant has been issued for the arrest of the second teen.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Man with knife in chest felt like having coffee

A man who walked into a Michigan diner with a 12.5-centimetre knife stuck in his chest ordered a coffee and complained only about the cold weather. The 52-year-old man called 911 Sunday to ask that an ambulance be sent. He said he had been stabbed during an attempted robbery, then walked about a kilometre to the restaurant and called 911 from a pay phone. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Movement to regulate drugs in U.S. water

Federal regulators under U.S. President Barack Obama have sharply shifted course on policy toward pharmaceutical residues in drinking water, taking a first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they may threaten human health. It was reported in 2008 that drinking water of 51 million Americans contains minute concentrations of a multitude of drugs such as antibiotics, sedatives and sex hormones.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Philippines **Christmas in an evacuation shelter**

BULLIT MARQUEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Children, all evacuees of Mayon volcano's ongoing mild eruption, queue up for ice cream at an evacuation centre Wednesday. Despite the risk of an imminent explosive eruption of the 2,460-metre Mayon, some residents weary of shelters are conspiring to go back to their abandoned villages for traditional Christmas Eve family gatherings.

Dissident on trial

Diplomats, including Canadian, barred from entering Chinese court

A high-profile Chinese dissident accused of subversion was tried at a two-hour hearing Wednesday that shut out foreign diplomats concerned over a case that reflects the communist government's deep suspicion of calls for political reform.

Liu Xiaobo was detained a year ago, just before the release of an unusually direct appeal for more civil rights in China he co-authored called Charter 08, signed by scores of China's top intellectuals. He faces up to 15 years in jail. The verdict is due Friday.

International human rights groups and Western nations have heavily criticized Liu's detention. A dozen diplomats, including from Canada, the United States, Britain, Germany and Australia, stood outside the Beijing courthouse in freezing weather, barred from entering, along with a handful of Liu's Chinese supporters.

Liu Xiaobo

"We call on the government of China to release him immediately," said Gregory May, first secretary with the U.S. Embassy.

Liu, 53, a literary critic and former professor, spent 20 months in jail for joining the 1989 student-led protests in Tiananmen Square that were crushed in a military crackdown. In his writings, most published only on the Internet, he has strongly called for civil rights and political reform.

Charter 08 demands a new constitution guaranteeing human rights, the open election of public officials, and freedom of religion and expression. Some 10,000 people have signed it in the past year, though a news blackout and Internet censorship have left most Chinese unaware that it exists.

Liu has been the only person arrested over the charter, but rights groups said several signers have been harassed or fired from their jobs, and warned not to attend the trial or write about it online. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

LOS ANGELES A judge has denied a request from an AIDS advocacy group calling for mandatory use of condoms on porn sets. Judge David Yaffe on Tuesday rejected a petition from the AIDS Healthcare Foundation that health officials hadn't done enough to prevent sexually transmitted diseases in the porn industry, according to the Los Angeles Times. The group sued L.A. County in July after data showed there were more than 3,700 STD cases in five years reported by a clinic that serves porn actors.

PHILIPPINES At least 27 people are missing after a passenger ferry collided with a fishing boat in Manila Bay in the Philippines. Philippine coast guard spokesman Armand Balilo says at least 46 people were rescued following the collision early Thursday.

INDIANA Police say a fifth-grader handed out about $300 to others on the school bus Friday. Problem is, they say, the cash was among some $10,000 US he took from his grandparents' safe. The cash was later returned to them.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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ScanLife

The economy ended the year in much better shape than it was last January, but there are five key reasons economists think we're not out of the woods yet. Scan this barcode for the full story.

Objective defeated as balloon boy parents barred from profiting from stunt

COLORADO The parents who carried out the balloon boy hoax were sentenced to jail Wednesday and given strict probation conditions that forbid them from earning any money from the spectacle for four years.

"Jay Leno said it best when he said, 'This is a copycat game.' And people will copycat this event. (The Heenes) need to go to jail so people don't do that."
Andrew Lewis, deputy district attorney

Richard Heene was sentenced to 90 days in jail, including 60 days of work release that will let him pursue his job as a construction contractor while serving his time.

His wife, Mayumi, was sentenced to 20 days in jail.

Richard Heene choked back tears as he said he was sorry, especially to the rescue workers who chased down false reports that his six-year-old son had floated away in a balloon on Oct. 15. It was a stunt designed to generate attention for a reality TV show.

Judge Stephen Schapanski then ordered Heene to begin a 30-day jail term on Jan. 11, delaying the start of the sentence for two weeks so he can spend the holidays with his family. Schapanski allowed Heene to serve the remaining 60 days of his jail term under work release, meaning he can work during the day but spend his nights in jail.

The Heenes' probation will be revoked if they are found to be profiting from any book, TV, movie or other deals related to the stunt.

Deputy District Attorney Andrew Lewis also asked for full restitution to reimburse authorities for the cost of investigating the hoax — an amount that could exceed $50,000 US.

"Jay Leno said it best when he said, 'This is a copycat game,'" Lewis said.

"And people will copycat this event. (The Heenes) need to go to jail so people don't do that."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pediatrician's alleged victims as young as six months old

DELAWARE A pediatrician is accused of molesting more than 100 patients, including some who appear to be no more than six months old, and police said the doctor used video cameras to record some of the attacks in exam rooms.

Alexis Slutsky, a deputy attorney general assigned to the state's Child Predator Task Force, said the volume of evidence seized from Dr. Earl Bradley's practice and home, including videotapes and computer files, makes it difficult to estimate the number of victims.

"I'm comfortable in saying probably well over 100 potential victims," she said at a news conference.

The case has shocked the community of Lewes, a town of about 3,100.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Disturbing charges

- An 18-page document detailed the alleged attacks in exam rooms, which had Disney themes such as Pinocchio, at BayBees Pediatrics, Bradley's solo practice. A detective who viewed the assaults described in court papers the six-foot, 225-pound Bradley as having a "violently enraged expression on his face" in one video involving a two-year-old.

Jamaica **No serious injuries in runway mishap**

LLOYD ROBINSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Workers sift through debris around American Airlines flight 331, which crash-landed late Tuesday night in Kingston, Jamaica. The jet, carrying 154 people including three Canadians, skidded across a runway in heavy rain, bouncing across the tarmac and injuring more than 40 people before it stopped just short of the Caribbean Sea. There were no fatalities, officials said, and the Department of Foreign Affairs said the Canadians were not among the injured.

Venice streets flooded
An unusually high tide flooded most of Venice early yesterday, forcing tourists and residents to wade through knee-high waters. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bill set to revamp U.S. health care

Passage will be a victory for Obama

The U.S. Senate was poised to hand President Barack Obama a huge Christmas Eve victory by approving a $913 billion overhaul of U.S. health care, capping months of struggle in the face of solid Republican opposition.

Thursday's vote on the bill extending health care coverage to 30 million uninsured Americans brings Obama closer to achieving his top domestic priority. But the final step may be the hardest: Reconciling the Senate bill with a significantly different version already approved by the House of Representatives.

A compromise would have to be approved by both chambers — and could collapse if Obama loses the support of any Democrat in the Senate or a handful in the House.

Passage of the bill Thursday was all but inevitable. Wednesday, Democrats prevailed on the last of three procedural votes requiring the support of all of the party's 58 members, plus two allied independents. Thursday's vote will require only a simple majority of the 100-member body.

"It has been a long time coming," said a leading Democratic senator, Max Baucus. "I thank God that I have lived to see this day."

The bill's passage will offer Obama a bright end to an often rocky year that began with huge hopes following his election victory. His public approval level now hovers around 50 per cent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health system overhaul

The legislation being passed in the U.S. Senate would bring important changes in the way health care is funded:

- Health insurance would still be provided mainly by employers, rather than the government, but it would now be mandatory for Americans to have insurance.
- Lower- and middle-income families would receive subsidies to pay for insurance.
- Unpopular insurance company practices, such as denying coverage to people with pre-existing health conditions, would be banned.

Dutch teen sailor back in father's care

HOME SAFE A Dutch court ruled Wednesday that 14-year-old sailor Laura Dekker can remain in her father's custody after she ran away from home and travelled alone to the Caribbean.

The ruling by the Utrecht District Court clears the way once again for Dekker to pursue her goal of being the youngest person to sail solo around the world.

"The court sees no need to remove Laura from her home at this moment," judges wrote.

Laura Dekker

Laura had originally planned to depart this year with the support of her father. But that plan was blocked in October by the court, which ordered her to prepare more and wait until 2010 before starting.

Frustrated, she fled last week with $5,000, prompting an international search. She travelled to Paris and used a New Zealand passport to catch a flight to the Dutch Caribbean territory of St. Maarten. She was spotted on St. Maarten and returned to the Netherlands Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alta.-based soldier killed

EXPLOSION A Canadian soldier, Lt. Andrew Richard Nuttall, has been killed by an improvised explosive device in southern Afghanistan.

An Afghan soldier was also killed and an interpreter injured in the blast, which occurred Wednesday in the restive Panjwaii district.

The explosion erupted in the town of Nakhoney, west of Kandahar city.

It's an area in which Canadian forces have frequently encountered problems, but one which had appeared to have calmed down in recent months.

Nuttall was with the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Edmonton, Alberta. His age was not immediately available. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Second Irish bishop steps down over abuse

COVERUP A second Roman Catholic bishop in Ireland announced Wednesday that he will resign in the wake of a damning investigation into decades of covering up child abuse in the Dublin archdiocese.

Bishop Jim Moriarty revealed his decision to priests and other officials in his diocese of Kildare and Leithlin, southwest of Dublin. Officials said Moriarty planned to travel to Rome to tender his resignation to Pope Benedict XVI, who has sole power to hire and fire bishops.

Moriarty said he accepted investigators' finding that he failed to react properly when told about abuse cases, particularly of one priest convicted of molesting girls in 1997. But he insisted his inaction reflected his colleagues' poor communication and secrecy.

"With the benefit of hindsight, I accept that, from the time I became an auxiliary bishop, I should have challenged the prevailing culture," Moriarty said in a statement.

Last week Bishop Donal Murray of Limerick resigned, becoming the first high-profile casualty of a government-ordered probe into the church's failure to tell authorities about more than 170 suspected child abusers in Dublin.

Abuse victims welcomed yesterday's resignation announcement, but emphasized that they believe three other current bishops named in the report must quit as well. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment

Season for memories

Relating

I have no way of knowing under what circumstances you're reading this, whether you're on your way home for the holidays or headed to work, trying to finish your shopping or just catching your breath.

It would be foolish of me to assume anything about what your holidays might look like, since you might not even know. I hope they're peaceful and spent with those you love, but that can be harder than it sounds.

Tomorrow will be whatever it is, and it often looks nothing like the Christmas cards. Our families have bent into all sorts of surprising shapes, and some of us are trying to make it to two or more Christmases, sometimes in different cities or countries.

Travel at this time of year is rough because it's so often mandatory, and schedules are tight. The weather is predictably unpredictable, and countless people find themselves stranded in airports, in hotels, anywhere but where they planned to be. Mangers, even.

And for many of us, there are empty, unfillable spots at the table, where somebody used to be and never will be again. That hurt gets quieter, but it doesn't go away, and it has a way of flaring up at this time of year. It isn't all Merry Happy.

One of the best Christmases I remember was also one of the worst. My father had died only a couple of months before and the rest of us were going to get together at my sister's, traditional as can be, closing ranks against grief.

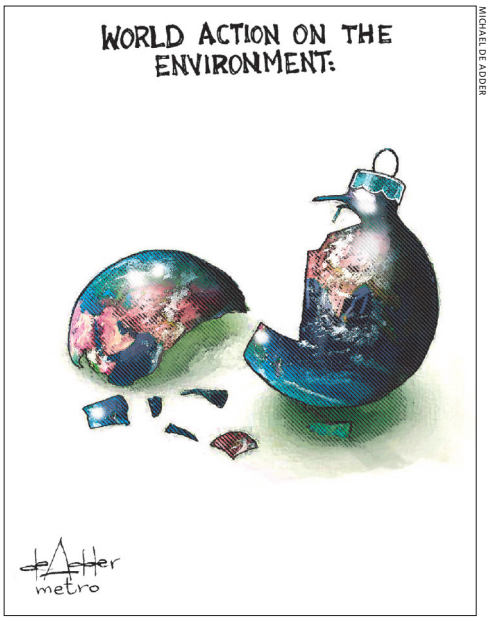
It didn't work out that way. Instead, we got waylaid 300 miles away with a house full of burst pipes and a stack of estate and insurance chores to chew over with a lawyer who didn't want to be there either.

We ended up stuck in a motel room, but we were stuck together. We had some laughs as well as some sobs, and got some laundry done at the coin wash. O holy night.

It wasn't what we expected and this holiday seldom is. Expectations are a big part of the problem, as we all try to transform ourselves from real people to perfect happy families in perfect happy sweaters.

So have yourself a merry little whatever, try to accept the relatives for who they are and who they are trying to be for the occasion. I wish you surpassingly great presents and more hugs than you can handle, but if it doesn't work out, you'll be in good company as we imperfectly celebrate another year of this imperfect, irreplaceable life.

Steve Collins offers his best guesses on relationships for Metro every two weeks.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Feminist newsmakers of the past year

FourthWave

If you needed any proof that feminism is necessary, all you need to do is look to this year's newsmakers. My feminist heroes for 2009 defended and expanded our ideas of what women can be, while the villains tried to scale them back:

Lady Gaga: There's a savvy woman behind the latex bodysuits and comically oversized sunglasses: Gaga takes her persona to an extreme because she recognizes it is constructed, and she criticizes double standards between female and male musicians (being open about sex undermines her music, while his exploits heighten his). And can you remember the last time a pop star used the F-word? Lady G called a Los Angeles Times writer "a little bit of a feminist, like I am," adding, "women need and want someone to look up to that they feel have the full sense of who they are."

Rihanna: Speaking of singers, here's one that reluctantly championed women's rights. After being assaulted by Chris Brown, Rihanna was silent about the whole ordeal until this fall, when she says she realized her fame afforded her a voice to educate women on domestic abuse.

Neda Agha-Soltan: During the disputed Iranian election, Neda was on her way to a pro-reform rally June 20 when a sniper allegedly shot and killed her. The haunting video of her last moments galvanized protesters and lent a face to the thousands shouting to make their votes count. Since the crackdown, the government has harassed and arrested prominent activists — women's rights organizers and Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi among them.

Lady Gaga

Stephen Harper: In recent years, the prime minister has killed funding for advocacy groups and ideologically neutered Status of Women Canada (a federal policy organization charged with improving the lives of women) by removing the essential "equality" part from its mandate. This September, Harper crowed about cuts to the Court Challenges Program, which financially assists people mounting constitutional court challenges — and called the people that used that funding a "left-wing fringe group."

VANOC: It started when a group of female ski jumpers challenged VANOC's decision to exclude its event at the 2010 Games, but ended Tuesday when the Supreme Court refused to hear its case. Sadly, it's neither the first nor last Olympics-related trampling of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms: The City of Vancouver ordered the removal of an anti-Olympic mural, while VANOC demanded a local restaurant named Olympia change its moniker. The heroines in all this are the athletes — some are teenagers fighting for women's rights, while at that age I was busy popping zits and moping.

Canice Leung is a former editor of Ryerson University feminist magazine McClung's, copy editor at Metro, ardent feminist and loudmouth.

Worth mentioning

North Korea gambles with new arms route

North Korea, banned from selling arms by UN sanctions, may have gambled and lost when it dispatched 35 tons of weapons by air rather than by sea as it has done in the past. Authorities seized the plane, which may have been bound for Iran, during a refuelling stop in Thailand.

The 11-day saga remains shrouded in mystery and missing pieces, including the final destination of the Ilyushin Il-76 cargo plane now under Thai custody along with its five-man crew.

Among difficulties facing investigators is a fly-by-night infrastructure seemingly rigged up for the flight, including a Hong Kong-based company reportedly involved that was only incorporated Nov. 2 and whose director could not be traced there or at his address in Spain.

But experts in South Korea say one thing appears clear: North Korea is seeking new ways to bust through a U.S.-led interdiction program of its arms sales.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sanctions

- The UN imposed sanctions in June, banning North Korea from exporting any arms after the communist regime conducted a nuclear test and test-fired missiles.

We Know What You're Thinking

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India emerges as world leader in small cars

India has emerged the leader in small cars, overtaking Japan, as declining sales in Western markets coupled with robust growth in Asia redraws the global map of the auto industry. More than 892,000 basic cars will be sold in India this year, surpassing the 708,034 forecast for Japan, according to J.D. Power and Associates. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

DOLLAR	GAS	OIL	TSX
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US 0.85¢	US 10.6¢	US $2.27	30.72

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Task Force readies 2010 report

Group appointed by Flaherty to create strategy on financial literacy as debt loads rise

The federal government's much-ballyhooed Task Force on Financial Literacy is scheduled to release its first report in early 2010 as its 13 members gear up for a cross-country public consultation.

Appointed by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty last June, the task force has the lofty goal of creating Canada's first-ever national strategy on financial literacy.

Although the tide appears to have turned on the recession, task force members say there is a pressing need for Canada to develop a potent action plan because consumers are deeper in debt than ever before.

Faced with job losses, clawed-back benefits and shrinking household incomes, increasing numbers are relying on credit to cover their daily living expenses. And that troubling trend has critics doubting whether the task force can inspire real change.

145%

Household debt-to-income ratio hit a record 145 per cent in September, so for every $100 of income, Canadians owe $145 in debt.

Economic woes aside, some experts argue that financial literacy programs are ineffective and amount to little more than a political guise designed to quell calls for more government regulation of the financial sector.

Task force member Laurie Campbell, however, says such criticisms are "very short-sighted." Since June, she and her colleagues have been assessing the state of financial literacy in Canada.

That involves gauging both domestic and international programs to determine which ones work best.

"We know there is no doubt a wealth of information out there, but we want to make sure that we're able to find the best fit and something that is going to make a long-term difference," said Campbell, who is also executive director of Credit Canada, a non-profit credit-counselling agency.

"Because it is not enough to give people information, we have to give people information that they can actually absorb and turn around and use."

The task force's next step is the release of a consultation document in February.

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Cars **Holiday shopping**

LEE CELIZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A salesman shows the features inside of a Buick LaCrosse CXS, at Hilltop Buick Pontiac GMC in Richmond, Calif., on Wednesday. Wealthier car buyers are returning to the showroom this holiday season, but they're pinching pennies of a sort by choosing smaller models of Mercedes or BMW — or buying the fanciest cars from other manufacturers.

Cyber crimes will move to smartphones in 2010: Experts

INTERNET As usual, we can expect the Internet to be rife with potential cyber crimes and annoyances next year — more spam, more fake antivirus software and more computers hijacked by criminals.

But 2010 will also see more attacks moving to smartphones, now that the devices are being used more like mobile computers, predict security experts. What's expected to be targeted are "apps" — software applications that let users do things like mobile banking and payments, as well as any other personal or work information on their smartphones.

"Attackers will probably be devoting more time to creating malware for those devices," said David Cowings of Symantec Security Response.

"Attackers will probably be devoting more time to creating malware for (smartphones)."
David Cowings, Symantec Security

The move to smartphones is natural because many users have them synchronized with their computers to allow better access to email, contacts and work documents that often contain a wealth of information. These kinds of cyber attacks could infect both the smartphone and the PC, said Cowings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business in brief

TELECOM Nortel Networks Corp. said Wednesday it has entered an agreement to sell all its carrier voice over Internet protocol and application solutions business to Genband Inc. for $282 million US.

DEFAULT Ski resort giant Intrawest ULC may default on a $1.4 billion US loan and is in talks with lenders about debt repayment options, according to a report. The report from Bloomberg that cited unidentified sources with direct knowledge of the matter, said Intrawest may be pushed closer to default if it fails to make a $524 million US payment due Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Economy to continue uphill, but jobless stats to stay flat: Analysts

PREDICTION Economists are cautiously optimistic that "recession" will not be a prominent phrase in the Canadian vocabulary next year as the economy trudges out from its second-worst annual decline in nearly half a century.

Most economists predict a gross domestic product growth rate between 2.5 to three per cent in 2010, about average by historical standards, but not robust enough to make a dent in the 8.5 per cent unemployment rate.

The growth would essentially reverse the 2.5 per cent decline seen this year.

This year will rank behind only 1982 as the worst year of economic decline since record-keeping began in 1961, said Douglas Porter, deputy chief economist with BMO Capital Markets.

Statistics Canada reported Wednesday a modest 0.2 per cent month-over-month growth in real gross domestic product in October, leading many economists to believe growth in the last quarter of 2009 could reach as much as four per cent.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Housing market **U.S. home resales surge**

NATI HARNIK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A sold sign is partially covered in snow, in Omaha, Neb., Wednesday. U.S. home resales surged last month to the highest level in nearly three years, reflecting an extraordinary level of federal support that has pulled the housing market back from the worst downturn since the Great Depression.

Happy Holidays!

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Gasol agrees to deal with Lakers

Pau Gasol has agreed to a three-year contract extension with the Los Angeles Lakers, and he's hoping Kobe Bryant follows his lead. Gasol's deal extends through the 2013-14 season, and could be worth more than $60 million US depending on future salary caps. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports

Deadline looms for fight

The promoter for boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao, left, says a fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr. will not happen unless Mayweather's camp drops its insistence for Olympic-style blood testing. Promoter Bob Arum says if that doesn't happen by Thursday, the proposed March 13 fight that would have likely been the richest ever in boxing is over. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Sports in brief

ALFREDSSON The Ottawa Senators are expected to be without captain Daniel Alfredsson for at least a few weeks after he left late in the first period of Wednesday game in Pittsburgh with a left shoulder injury. "I'll probably see the doctor (Thursday) and do an X-ray and see what the damage is," said Alfredsson, whose arm was in a sling. "But I expect at least a few weeks."

PIERCE Celtics forward Paul Pierce had fluid drained from his right knee Wednesday and will miss the next two weeks. Pierce did not make the flight to Orlando for a Christmas Day game against the Magic.

CRISP The Athletics have finalized a $5.25 million US, one-year contract with free agent outfielder Coco Crisp. The deal announced Wednesday pays Crisp $4.75 million next year and includes a $5.75 million club option for 2011 with a $500,000 buyout.

BILLS An ankle injury prevented Buffalo Bills starter Ryan Fitzpatrick from practising Wednesday, opening the possibility for Brian Brohm to make his NFL debut at Atlanta this weekend. Interim head coach Perry Fewell declined to rule out Fitzpatrick, saying the quarterback was feeling better after he was hurt in a 17-10 loss against New England last weekend.

BRAVES The power-hungry Atlanta Braves are hoping longtime third baseman Troy Glaus can fill the team's void at first base. The Braves have reached a preliminary agreement on a one-year contract with Glaus, a person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press.

UMPIRES Major League Baseball ensured its first decade of labour peace since the 1960s by agreeing to a five-year contract with umpires that runs through 2014.

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Flames fall in shootout

NHL

Blues 2 Flames 1

AT

Brad Boyes and T.J. Oshie scored shootout goals Wednesday night to give the St. Louis Blues a 2-1 victory over the Calgary Flames.

The victory sends the Blues home for Christmas with a three-game win streak — its first of the season — after picking up victories in Vancouver and Edmonton.

Boyes put the Blues into the lead with a deke move in which he squeeked his shot inside the goal post behind Miikka Kiprusoff.

After Olli Jokinen hit the goal post on the Flames second attempt, Oshie cliched the win snapping a shot through Kiprusoff's pads.

Patrik Berglund scored the lone regulation time goal for St. Louis (17-14-5), which has won six of its last seven road games and is 11-3-3 away from home on the season.

Mark Giordano had the lone goal for Calgary (20-11-5). The Flames limp into the Christmas break with just one victory in their last six games (1-3-2).

• A quick look at some of Wednesday's other NHL games:

Penguins 8 Senators 2

At Pittsburgh, Evgeni Malkin had his fourth career hat trick, Bill Guerin added two goals and two assists, and the Penguins headed into the holiday break tied with New Jersey atop the NHL standings with 53 points.

Guerin and Chris Kunitz had four points apiece during Pittsburgh's five-goal second period, when Ruslan Fedotenko also scored.

Sergei Gonchar added a goal and two assists, and Sidney Crosby had three assists for the Penguins (26-11-1), who tied a season high for goals.

Anton Volchenkov and Chris Kelly scored for Ottawa.

Canadiens 5 Hurricanes 1

At Raleigh, N.C., Glen Metropolit scored two power-play goals after Andrei Markov had his third in three games for Montreal.

Jaroslav Halak made 46 saves, Andrei Kostitsyn, Sergei Kostitsyn and Glen Metropolit added goals while Tomas Plekanec and Scott Gomez had three assists apiece.

Brandon Sutter scored for Carolina.

Wild 3 Oilers 1

At St. Paul, Minn., Niklas Backstrom made 30 saves for Minnesota to improve to 14-1 in his career against Edmonton.

Andrew Brunette, Owen Nolan and Guillaume Latendresse scored for the Wild. Robert Nilsson scored Edmonton. The Oilers have lost five in a row.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

St. Louis Blue Brad Winchester crashes into Calgary Flames goalie Miikka Kiprusoff during second period NHL action in Calgary on Wednesday.

Canada faces some tough competition

They are the home team and therefore the favourite, but winning gold at the world junior hockey championship won't be easy for Canada.

The Swedes, who lost 5-1 to their hosts in the final last year in Ottawa, are back with big goaltender Jacob Markstrom and a fleet of gifted forwards, and the Russians, who lost to Canada in a shootout in the semifinals, should be just as dangerous with Nikita Filatov cruising for goals.

Meanwhile, the Canadians have lost some of their best scorers to the NHL, like John Tavares, Matt Duchene and Evander Kane, as well as the injured Cody Hodgson, and may need to rely more than usual on defence and team play as they try to win a record sixth consecutive gold medal.

"The record is exciting in itself, especially to do it on home soil," said Canadian defenceman Ryan Ellis, one of four Windsor Spitfires on the team. "It's important for us to win this and be part of history.

"It would help if we had a lot of those guys in the NHL, but I think we'll be fine. Everyone will step up and play better than they ever have."

The tournament, officially called the IIHF Under-20 World Championship, kicks off Saturday with Canada playing the first round in Saskatoon in Group A with Slovakia, the U.S., Latvia and Switzerland, while the tighter Group B in Regina has Sweden, Russia, the Czech Republic, Finland and Austria. The final is Jan. 5.

Canada opens against Latvia with six players returning from last year's squad: Ellis and fellow defencemen Alex Pietrangelo of the St. Louis Blues and Colten Teubert of the Regina Pats, and forwards Jordan Eberle of the Pats, Patrice Cormier of the Rimouski Oceanic and Stefan Della Rovere of the Barrie Colts.

Eberle, who scored six goals in as many games at last year's tournament, and Brayden Schenn of the Brandon Wheat Kings, who was drafted fifth overall by the Los Angeles Kings in June, are expected to be offensive engines, along with an entire line of Spitfires: Centre Adam Henrique, right-winger Greg Nemisz and left-winger Taylor Hall.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

GEOFF HOWE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's Brayden Schenn is stuffed by Czech Republic goalie Pavel Francouz during world junior exhibition play Wednesday. Canada edged the Czech Republic 3-2 on a goal by Jordan Eberle.

SCOREBOARD

NHL

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

St. Louis 2 CALGARY 1 (SO)
Montreal 5 Carolina 1
Minnesota 3 Edmonton 1
N.Y. Islanders 3 Toronto 1
Pittsburgh 8 Ottawa 2
Boston 6 Atlanta 4
Chicago 3 Detroit 0
Dallas 3 Columbus 1
N.Y. Rangers 4 Florida 1
Philadelphia 5 Tampa Bay 2
Phoenix 4 Anaheim 0
Washington 5 Buffalo 2

THURSDAY
No Games Scheduled.

NBA

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

Toronto 94 Detroit 64
Denver 124 Atlanta 104
Miami 80 Utah 70
Minnesota 103 New Jersey 99
New Orleans 108 Golden State 102
Oklahoma City 117 Phoenix 113
Orlando 102 Houston 87
Portland 98 San Antonio 94
Washington 109 Milwaukee 97
Cleveland at Sacramento

THURSDAY
No Games Scheduled.

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Splash out
Longines ladies Dolce Vita watch, $1,750, features 12 numerals set with six diamonds and silver dots. Available at every retailer across Canada that carries Longines. For more, go to longines.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

HOLIDAY

Shopping Guide

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Bathing beauties

Rocky Mountain Soap Company's Spicy Mandarin Christmas, $21.50. Includes Large Spicy Mandarin Body Butter, Spicy Mandarin Soap, and Spicy Mandarin Bath Salt. Available at stores across Canada, or at rockymountainsoap.com.

Fruity Foaming Bath Collection, $24 (6 x 40 mL). Comes in six colours and fragrances: Field Berries, Pear-Peony, Grapefruit-Guava, Georgia Peach, Very Lemon and Orange-Cantaloupe. Available at Fruits & Passion stores across Canada. For more, go to fruits-passion.com.

12 Days of Christmas, $74.95, includes a Holiday Bubble Bar, Jingle Spells, and more. Call 1-866-644-5874 or visit lush.ca for more.

Winter White Fresh and Winter White Citrus body wash, $16.50 each; and **Winter White Fresh and Winter White Citrus splash**, $29.50 each. Available at Bath and Body Works stores across Canada. For more, go to bathandbodyworks.com.

MERRY CRANBERRY COLLECTION
Pamper her with cranberry treats from The Body Shop this holiday season. This best-selling holiday favourite collection includes bath and shower gel, soap, lip balm, body butter, frosted shimmer lotion, candles, home fragrance oil, and much more.
$5-$24
Available at The Body Shop stores across Canada.
thebodyshop.ca

Jacky Frost, Gingerbread Woman and Snow Woman bath and shower bubbles, $20 each. For more, go to cake beauty.com.

Season's Treatings by Bliss, $45, includes body butter, hand cream and body wash. Available at Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.

Molton Brown Hand Wash and **Molton Brown Hand Lotion**, $30 each. Available at Murale stores across Canada. For more, go to murale.ca.

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This Princess 6 V Quad car, $119.99, includes a 6-volt battery and charger. Suitable for ages 3 and up. At Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Hey, good-looking

Davidoff Hot Water Eau de Toilette, $65 for 60 mL and $$87 for 110 mL. Also comes in after-shave balm, $49 for 100 mL, and deodorant, $30 for 75 g. Available at Sears and select drug stores across Canada.

Braun Series 7 Pulsonic shaver, $279.99-$339.99, features an LCD display screen. Available in department and mass merchandise stores across Canada.

David Beckham Signature Story for Him, $57 for 50 mL and $69 for 75 mL. Available at drug and department stores across Canada.

Solutions by Vidal Sassoon Haircut Kit, $24.99, is an 18-piece system that includes a barber comb and steel barber shears. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart. For more, go to shoppersdrugmart.ca.

Life Brand Revitalizing Shower Gel Set, $6.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart. For more, go to shoppersdrugmart.ca.

Carry-on Companions, $29.75, includes travel-sizes of Aveda Men Pure-Formance Shampoo and Aveda Men Pure-Formance Grooming Clay. Available in Aveda salons, spas and stores. For more, call 1-800-689-1066.

C.O. Bigelow Barber Collection for Him includes **Elixir White Cologne**, $24.50; **Elixir White Hair & Body Wash**, $13; and **Elixir White Ultra-Light Body Lotion**, $13. Available at Bath and Body Works, bathandbodyworks.com.

Sephora Viva Box Collector's Fragrance Sampler for Him, $45. Includes Ralph Lauren Polo Black, Versace Pour Homme Eau de Toilette and Canali Eau de Toilette. At Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.

Easy gift-wrapping tips to save you time, money

Here are five ways to wrap a gift and keep your time and wallet intact.

1 Paper: Instead of having different wrapping paper for holidays and birthdays, opt for a roll of sturdy basic brown or white paper from an art or office supply shop. The paper can be decorated any number of ways and made seasonally appropriate with ribbons.

2 Ribbon: Instead of a stick-on bow and plastic ribbon, substitute household basics like twine, baker's string or yarn, said MaryElise Cervelli, a gift wrap expert at Milwaukee's Broadway Paper. Other things to try include hair ribbons, lace trim, other bric-a-brac, an old skinny tie or a scarf.

3 Decorate: If plain paper isn't your thing, jazz it up. Use rubber stamps to add flair, or make your own stamps out of potatoes or sponges. Tie on bits of nature — a holly sprig or fresh pine needles this time of year, dried or fresh flowers in summer.

If you have kids, put them to work finger painting or stamping the paper. Or, reuse some of their old paintings and drawings. Kids love to see their handiwork under the tree.

4 Cut & tape: Snag pages from old calendars (circle an important date to give it a theme). Old maps or magazines also work great, as do newspapers.

Those options don't sing to you? Open your dictionary and turn to a favourite word — say, "merry." Photocopy the text and enlarge it onto whatever size paper you need.

5 Gift tags: Collect the Christmas cards you've received (or buy a box at a discount shop) and bust out the scissors. Cut the fronts into inch-wide strips. Fold the strips in half and you have a tag. Another option is to steal a playing card from an old deck. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Stocking stuffer
Where The Wild Things Are ornament, $19.99 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Did you forget to do your holiday shopping?

Advice for the procrastinator

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

It's Dec. 24. You settle in front of the tube with a cider to watch It's A Wonderful Life, glance at the gifts under the tree and get the feeling you're forgetting something.

Don't fear, present procrastinator!

Just remember these tips to weather the last-minute holiday shopping hustle...

Prime for lines

Lineups amid your heel-dragging brethren can encourage public fits of frustration due to the claustrophobic combination of chipper Christmas music, flashing lights and other latecomers inadvertently touching you. So zen out by bringing a rousing book or iPod to tune out the lot. Podcasts from programs like CBC's Definitely Not The Opera or NPR's This American Life will make you happy by making light of the human absurdity you're surrounded by.

Be thoughtfully thoughtless

Sure, gift cards aren't the most attentive festive offerings, but they're easy, often have no expiry date and save you from picking a present the recipient may completely hate, thereby ruining your relationship forever all because you waited so long to shop. Plus, it doesn't take much to personalize a plastic rectangle. Consider what the giftee likes (makeup? books? power tools?) and pick a shop with a selection of it. Buy a greeting card, write a schmaltzy message expressing your love, and seal with gift card inside.

When all else fails, remember the two Fs...

Fragrances and full-refund! Perfume and cologne provide a perfect outlet to buy your way out of Christmas neglect. Go expensive: Black Orchid by Tom Ford or Stella by Stella McCartney for ladies; Tabarome by Creed or π (Pi Neo) by Givenchy for guys. If you buy a box set, crack it open and wrap items individually to mask your embarrassingly obvious inclination toward a deal. But whether buying an eau de toilette or toiletries (don't gift toiletries), always ask for the store refund policy and/or obtain a gift receipt. This lets the recipient return your present and get what they really wanted in the first place.

... Unless the stores are closed

If you waited this long, you've really only got two options left: The Internet or cornerstore cigars and scratch-and-wins. For some reason, not everybody appreciates the latter. Instead, use the series of tubes to find a gift you don't need to wait for in the mail. Magazine subscriptions, e-coupons for music and book downloads and getaway bookings are easy point-and-click buys and don't even require wrapping. Simply pen a note proclaiming your thoughtfulness, emphasize how your gift is so superior the recipient must wait to get it, and watch the joy spread across his or her face on Christmas morning.

*Sony Ericsson X1, HTC Magic and BlackBerry Bold 9000 (white) available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice and data plan having min. $45 monthly service fee. Nokia N86 8MP and LG Eve available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice and data plan. All other devices featured available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice plan. Early cancellation fees apply.
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CITY: 7.9L/100 km (36 mpg)▼

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For the latest information, visit us at gm.ca, drop by your local Pontiac Buick GMC Dealer or call us at 1-800-GM-DRIVE: ‡ $1,000 holiday bonus cash is a manufacturer to dealer delivery credit (tax exclusive) available on all 2009/2010 Pontiac Buick GMC models excluding Savana and Medium Duty Trucks. † Financing available on approved GMAC credit only. 0% purchase financing available for 72/60/36 months on 2009 Pontiac G5 (1SM)/G3 (1SM)/Vibe (1SD). Down payment and / or trade may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment / trade. Example: $10,000 at 0% for 72/60/36 months, the monthly payment is $138.89/$166.67/$277.78. Cost of borrowing is $0, total obligation is $10,000. ‡/† Offers apply as indicated to new or demonstrator models. Dealer trade may be required. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Limited offers subject to change without notice. Offers apply to qualified retail customers in Alberta Pontiac Buick GMC Dealer Marketing Association area only. See your GM dealer for details. ▼Based on Natural Resources Canada's 2009 Fuel Consumption Guide Ratings. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. ◊ U.S. Government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). For more information on safety ratings, go to www.safercar.gov. ‡‡ OnStar services require vehicle electrical system (including battery), wireless service and GPS satellite signals to be available and operating for features to function properly. OnStar acts as a link to existing emergency service providers. Subscription Service Agreement required. Call 1-888-4ONSTAR (1-888-466-7827) or visit onstar.ca for OnStar's Terms and Conditions. Privacy Policy and details and system limitations. Additional information can be found in the OnStar Owner's Guide. ¥ GMCL will pay the first two months' GMAC finance payments for finance terms up to 60 months only, paid up to a maximum monthly finance payment of $400 (tax included). Offer applicable to equal monthly payment finance agreements with GMAC and subject to GMAC credit approval. License, insurance, registration and administration fees not included and may be payable upon signing. Program not available to recipients of any previous GM student/graduate offer. Visit gmstudentbonus.ca for more details.

This year in fashion 2009

Hosted by Glen Baxter, a special edition of In Fashion reviews the memorable moments and events that shaped the world of fashion in 2009. Premieres Sunday on CTV. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Style

If the shoe fits... the recipient

Need a last-minute gift idea for the fashionista in your life? Dazzle her with the The Red Shoe Lover's Cell Phone Holder. This bejeweled stand, adorned with fully-faceted crystals, fits most standard headsets and features a built-in grommet for a recharging cable. She will be head over heels for it! Available at The Shoe (thesource.ca) for $9.99.

METRO NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Best and worst '09

Metro polled editors across our 100 editions worldwide to compile this list of who looked great and who didn't this year

Best

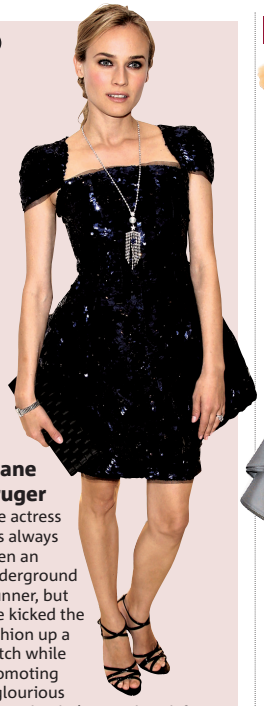
1

Michelle Obama
Dubbed the first lady of fashion, Michelle Obama dazzled us with her sleeveless, strapless, and one-armed gowns, classic sheath dresses and creative accessories over the past year. She helped put budding designers on the map (i.e. Jason Wu) and showed off her modesty with old favourites like J. Crew. Not since Jackie O has the fashion world been so intrigued with the White House.

2

Rihanna
Homegirl may have kept her emotions about Chris Brown under wraps, but she was always ready for a photo-op, displaying her increasingly edgy wardrobe for all to see.

3



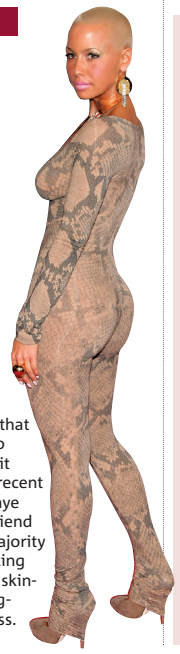
Diane Kruger
The actress has always been an underground stunner, but she kicked the fashion up a notch while promoting Inglourious Basterds. She's got a knack for wearing pretty pieces that have just the right amount of edge.

Best & Worst

Lady Gaga
We loved: Her wild and crazy approach to fashion (see every outfit in her video for Bad Romance and her wardrobe at the MTV VMA awards).
We hated: Her wild and crazy approach to fashion (i.e. that puzzling bolero made of Kermit the frog stuffed animals and that weird hat made of deer antlers).

Worst

1



Amber Rose
Never mind that she seems to have pulled it together in recent months, Kanye West's girlfriend spent the majority of 2009 looking like one hot skin-tight legging-wearing mess.

2

Katie Price
From the unnatural-looking tan to the Malibu Barbie clothes, the British reality TV star has made a living out of looking bad.

3

Mariah Carey
Why our beloved diva insists on squeezing into dresses that are clearly a few sizes too small is beyond us. On one hand, we love the kookiness of it all. On the other, we wish she'd burn the Spanx and exhale normally.

Mounir Mouffarige recently stepped down from his post as Emanuel Ungaro's CEO to devote more time to his other businesses.

Ungaro president steps down

DESIGNER The president of foundering Paris-based label Emanuel Ungaro — who hired Hollywood star Lindsay Lohan last season in what critics decried as a desperate move to revive the flagging brand — has stepped down, the fashion house said in a statement last week.

Lebanese-born businessman Mounir Moufarrige is leaving "in order to devote more time to his other businesses, namely, in the watch and jewelry industry," the statement said.

A press officer for the Ungaro said Moufarrige, who joined the label in 2006, will continue to serve on its strategic committee as an adviser on an "as-needed basis."

Moufarrige has made a specialty out of reviving semi-dormant brands: His achievements include turning the Montblanc pen into a cult object and hiring then little-known designer Stella McCartney at Chloe.

Once favoured by Hollywood's elite, Ungaro had been bleeding money since its founder retired in 2004. However, Moufarrige struggled to turn the label around, and his attempts to appeal to younger consumers appeared to grow ever more desperate as the years ticked by.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Changes

- Ungaro vice-president Marie Fournier has been named general manager "to oversee all operations," according to a recent statement. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lively lights up Green Lantern
Gossip Girl actress Blake Lively is set to star in new comic book movie Green Lantern. The 22-year-old blonde star is being lined-up to play the love interest of the main character Hal Jordan — who is played by Ryan Reynold. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Entertainment

Baby Knoxville
It's a boy for Johnny Knoxville and girlfriend Naomi Nelson. The couple welcomed son Rocko Akira Clapp on Sunday in Los Angeles. The baby weighed in at 8 pounds.
PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Gilliam creates imaginary world

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus
Director: Terry Gilliam
Stars: Heath Ledger, Johnny Depp
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

RICHARD CROUSE
for Metro Canada

As you may have guessed from the title, The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus is an odd movie. Directed by Terry Gilliam, it's the strange tale of a mysterious immortal who complicates his life by making deals with the devil.

Complicating Gilliam's life during production was the unexpected death of his star Heath Ledger but, the show, as they say, must go on and here we are after the untimely January 2008 passing of the young actor, with a completed film. How did Gilliam finish the movie? A new credit, A Film from Heath Ledger and Friends tells the tale.

Three of Ledger's buddies, Johnny Depp (seen dancing on a leaf!), Colin Farrell and Jude Law, stepped in to play "through the looking glass" versions of the late actor.

Set in present day London the film begins with a look at Doctor Parnassus' (Christopher Plummer) bizarre traveling show that offers people a chance to step through Dr.P's magical mirror into an alternate reality. He's selling imagination, but his gift of mind's eye manipulation came with a heavy price.

Eons before he made a trade with the devil (Tom Waits): Remarkable power in exchange for his first born daughter on her sixteenth birthday. That anniversary is now days away but with the help of a mysterious stranger named Tony (played by Ledger, Depp, Law and Farrell) and the magic mirror Dr. P just may be able to save her.

Actor Heath Ledger died unexpected during production of The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus.

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus is more a piece of surrealist art than a traditional movie. Imagine watching a Salvador Dali painting come to life and you'll get the idea. Gilliam, who co-wrote the script as well as directed, has allowed his imagination to run riot.

While the story meanders to and fro he fills the screen with unforgettable images; Old Nick dangling Dr. P from the end of a branch or a multi-eyed hot air balloon shaped like a man's head or the ensemble of skirt wearing, dancing Bobbies. Visually it'll make your eyeballs do the Watusi.

The story, however, may leave some a bit baffled, but so what if it warps the brain a bit? The film oozes Gilliam's trademarked anarchic spirit — he might be the only filmmaker who could replace his leading man with three other actors and actually pull it off — and is the most original movie of the year.

On the web

- For movie trailers, photos and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies.

It's Complicated uncommonly mature

It's Complicated
Director: Nancy Meyers
Stars: Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin, Steve Martin
Classification: 14A
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

REVIEW Writer/director Nancy Meyers (Something's Got To Give) is a specialist in romantic comedies about middle-aged women. It's a genre with a built in audience and normally few surprises.

However, there's something different about It's Complicated. This movie actually presents psychologically believable characters and doesn't offer easy happy endings. For a holiday release comedy, it is surprisingly well written despite the Hollywood fantasy elements.

Sure everyone in the movie is ridiculously rich and impossibly attractive, but if Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin actually had children there probably wouldn't be a fugly kid in the family.

Meryl Streep stars as a divorcee whose youngest child just left for college. Just as she starts planting the seeds for a relationship with a charming architect (Steve Martin), Streep has a drunken rendezvous with her ex-husband (Alec Baldwin) that leads to an affair.

All the expected comic mix-ups and zany shenanigans follow, but what is a pleasant surprise is that they have genuine repercussions for the characters and nothing gets tidied up in an obvious way.

For the most part this is a lighthearted romp, but Nancy Meyers crafts her characters as believable human beings and there is a mature undercurrent of reality rarely found in this sort of movie.

Despite the clever screenplay, this is an actor's movie and Meyers cast the roles well.

Meryl Streep is her expected excellent self, getting plenty of laughs while still creating a three dimensional character. Steve Martin delivers the goods as always, but the real star is Alec Baldwin who steals every scene.

Baldwin has really come into his own as a comic actor in recent years as his burgeoning beer-belly and scotch n' cigars scarred voice began to overcome his leading man looks. It's Complicated might be a little too familiar to be considered a great movie, but it is uncommonly mature for the genre and should please the target audience.

Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin star in It's Complicated.

- For It's Complicated trailers, photos and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies.

Jon & Kate most overexposed couple
Jon and Kate Gosselin have been named the most overexposed couple of the year, easily beating out Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie in a popeater.com poll. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Auction to sell Cher's home

PEOPLE Cher's six-bedroom Hawaii home overlooking the Pacific Ocean is set to be auctioned Jan. 18.

Concierge Auctions estimated the property with views of the Hualalai Golf Course at $8 million to $12 million US.

A website set up for the sale says the property has a main residence and five freestanding bungalows. Four have bedroom suites, and the fifth is a media bungalow with a bar.

Cosby to receive special award

PRIZE Bill Cosby will be the next recipient of the Marian Anderson Award.

He is to accept the award and $100,000 prize April 6 at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. The comedian, actor and educator is being honoured for his cultural impact as well as his work in encouraging academic achievement and calling for accountability in the black community.

It honours artists whose leadership benefits society. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fun from start to finish

Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law are perfect together in Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes
Director: Guy Ritchie
Stars: Robert Downey Jr., Jude Law
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕⊕

NED EHRBAR
for Metro Canada

Robert Downey Jr., left, and Jude Law stir up plenty of chemistry in Sherlock Holmes.

REVIEW Guy Ritchie's risky re-imagining of literature's most famous detective definitely pays off well, thanks in most part to the sheer force of charisma that is Robert Downey Jr.

As he proved earlier this year in the middling The Soloist, Downey can be great even when the movie around him fails to perform. Luckily, in Sherlock Holmes he doesn't have to.

The film takes all the strokes of genius and superhuman deductive skills usually attributed to Holmes and adds the psychological shortcomings that would naturally go with them. He can't venture out into public without obsessively clocking every odd behavior of his fellow Londoners.

Downey portrays all of this splendidly, as unhinged is one of his better looks. But Holmes is nothing without Watson, and under Ritchie's direction, Jude Law is better than he's been in years. The two are perfect together, stirring up enough chemistry to make Watson's fiancée (Kelly Reilly) feel like an unwanted distraction.

Unfortunately, most of Holmes' ticks are abandoned for the second half, when they get down to the business of unraveling the case at hand, the mysterious resurrection of convicted murderer Lord Blackwood (the menacing Mark Strong).

There are plenty of elaborate action sequences set throughout the grey, muddy, under-construction London, but all the loose ends tie up a bit too neatly in the end — except for those needed to tease a sequel. It's absolute fun from start to finish, but it would be nice if so much of the fun weren't front-loaded.

• For Sherlock Holmes photos, a trailer and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies.

Vatican congratulates The Simpsons

TV To put it as the devout Ned Flanders would, the Vatican's newspaper thinks The Simpsons are an okely dokely bunch.

L'Osservatore Romano congratulated the show on its 20th anniversary on Tuesday, praising its philosophical leanings as well as its stinging and often irreverent take on religion.

Without Homer Simpson and the other yellow-skinned characters "many today wouldn't know how to laugh," said the article titled Aristotle's Virtues and Homer's Doughnut.

The paper credited The Simpsons, the longest-running American animated program, with opening up cartoons to an adult audience. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenya's Style

Kenya Hunt
Exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

For complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and tickets, visit: metronews.ca/movies

Longoria launches fragrance
Eva Longoria is to launch her own fragrance. The Desperate Housewives actress has created a new scent with Falic Fashion Group and was keen to make something wearable and not overpowering. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Nine is not enough

Musical fails to make transition stage to the big screen

Nine
Director: Rob Marshall
Stars: Daniel Day-Lewis, Penelope Cruz
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕⊕½

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Nine marks director Rob Marshall's second attempt to turn a lavish stage show into a big-screen showstopper.

REVIEW Based on a musical (which itself was based on Federico Fellini's classic film 8 ½), Nine marks director Rob Marshall's second attempt to turn a lavish stage show into a big-screen showstopper.

Well why not? After all, he found success with Chicago (which won the Best Picture Oscar in 2003) but unfortunately this Italian-set noodle only ends up al dente.

Daniel Day Lewis plays an admired filmmaker in the 1960s that flees Rome and the set of his latest picture at the outset of a midlife crisis. Paralyzed by a creative deadlock, his quandary is reflected in fantasy sequences as the auteur encounters the women in his life — his enduring wife (Marion Cotillard), mistress (Penelope Cruz), mother (Sophia Loren) and others played by the likes of Nicole Kidman and Kate Hudson.

While a song notably accompanies each female's appearance (and surprisingly, the cast can carry a tune) and is intended to reveal the filmmaker's internal struggle, most of the arrangements are still simply unremarkable with the possible exception of Be Italian, the movie's signature song (performed by Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas).

Marshall helps to compensate with a slick production, opulent sequences and a recurring chorus of scantily-clad dancers but without some fetching songs to support it, Nine does not add up to a momentous musical.

While a scrawny storyline only adds to the film's lack of luster, fans of musicals that are willing to accept the film for its surface glitter may be thrilled. For the rest of us … well, rent 8 ½ on DVD over the holidays to see what goes much better without singing.

• For Nine photos, a trailer and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies

Director goes back in time for Victoria

The Young Victoria
Director: Jean-Marc Vallee
Stars: Emily Blunt, Rupert Friend
Classification: STC
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

ADAM NAYMAN
for Metro Canada

REVIEW It's a bit disappointing that Quebecois director Jean-Marc Vallee chose to follow up his ecstatic 2005 debut C.R.A.Z.Y. with a Golden Age melodrama. Why would such an unruly, contemporary talent willingly stuff himself into a period-piece corset?

That said, The Young Victoria, which stars Emily Blunt as the eponymous monarch and Rupert Friend as her ardent suitor Prince Albert, is perfectly acceptable filmmaking in the costume drama mode. As an examination of girl-in-a-gilded-cage melancholy, it's far more affecting than last year's similarly themed The Duchess (which seemed mostly like an excuse to dress Keira Knightley in a variety of fetching ensembles). Screenwriter Julian Fellowes frames the monarch not as an ascendant icon but a frustrated teenage girl, and it's no small compliment to say that the 26-year old Blunt comes off as credibly adolescent (including a few nicely played temper tantrums).

Vallee eschews the directorial pyrotechnics that marked C.R.A.Z.Y., but still has some trouble finding an appropriately stately pace: The introductions of several major characters and their various roles in palace intrigue (most of it revolving around the 18-year-old queen's ability to rule) feel rushed. Eventually, the film settles into a gauzy, romantic groove, building to a climax that feels emotionally authentic even as it plays rather fast and loose with the historical record.

Cineplex | Empire | Landmark | Independent

Screen Times

This week's new releases are highlighted in pink.

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., DEC. 25 TO THURS., JAN. 1. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

CANYON MEADOWS
Bay 110 13226 Macleod Trail, 403-670-5444

Amelia (PG) Sat-Thu 12:50-7:05-9:40
Armored (14A) Sat-Thu 3:30-7:25-9:45
Astro Boy (PG) Sat-Thu 1:30-3:35-7
Cairo Time (STC) Sat-Thu 3:40
Capitalism: A Love Story (STC) Sat-Thu 9:30
Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs (G) Sat-Thu 1:20-4-6:45
Couples Retreat (PG) Sat-Thu 1:05-4:05-6:50-9:20
The Fourth Kind (14A) Sat-Thu 9:35
The Invention of Lying (PG) Sat-Thu 7:30-9:50
The Men Who Stare at Goats (14A) Sat-Thu 1:3:45-6:55-9:25
No Films Showing Today (STC) Fri
Paranormal Activity (14A) Sat-Thu 10
The Stepfather (14A) Sat-Thu 1:25-3:55-7:20-9:40
Surrogates (14A) Sat-Thu 12:55
Where the Wild Things Are (PG) Sat-Thu 1:10-3:50-7:15
Zombieland (18A) Sat-Thu 1:35-3:50-7:10-9:55

CROWFOOT CROSSING
91 Crowfoot Terrace, 403-547-3316

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) No Passes Fri 2:30-4:50-7:05-9:15 No Passes Sat-Thu 11:50-2:30-4:50-7:05-9:15
Avatar (PG) No Passes Fri 4:15-8 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:30-4:15-8
Avatar 3D (PG) No Passes Fri 3:15-7:10:30 No Passes Sat-Thu 11:45-3:15-7:10:30
The Blind Side (PG) Fri 4:10-7:05-10 Sat-Thu 1:10-4:10-7:05-10
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Fri 4:20-7:30-10:05 Sat-Thu 1:20-4:20-7:30-10:05
Disney's A Christmas Carol (PG) Fri 3:45 Sat-Thu 12:10
Invictus (STC) Fri 3:50-6:55-9:50 Sat-Thu 12:50-3:50-6:55-9:50
It's Complicated (14A) No Passes Fri 3:30-7:35-10:25 No Passes Sat-Thu 12-3:30-7:35-10:25
Nine (PG) No Passes Fri 4-7:15-10:15 No Passes Sat-Thu 1-4-7:15-10:15
The Princess and the Frog (G) Fri 2:40-5-7:25-9:40 Sat-Thu 12:20-2:40-5-7:25-9:40
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes Fri 3:40-7:20-10:20 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:40-3:40-7:20-10:20
The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG) Fri 6:50-9:45 Sat-Thu 3:45-6:50-9:45
Up in the Air (14A) No Passes Fri 4:30-7:10-9:55 No Passes Sat-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:10-9:55

EAU CLAIRE MARKET
200 Barlay Parade, 403-263-3166

Avatar (PG) No Passes Fri 4-8 No Passes Sat-Thu 12-4-8
It's Complicated (14A) No Passes Fri 3:20-6:50-9:40 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:20-3:20-6:50-9:40
Nine (PG) No Passes Fri 3:10-6:40-10 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:10-3:10-6:40-10
Precious: Based on the Novel ``Push'' by Sapphire (14A) Fri 3:30-7-9:45 Sat-Thu 12:30-3:30-7-9:45
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes Fri 3-6:30-9:50 No Passes Sat-Thu 11:50-3-6:30-9:50
Up in the Air (14A) No Passes Fri 3:40-7:10-9:55 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:40-3:40-7:10-9:55

EMPIRE STUDIO 16 COUNTRY HILLS
388 Country Hills Blvd., 403-686-8491

2012 (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 9:20
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:40-4:45-6:35-7:05-9:10-9:40 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:10-12:50-3:40-4:45-6:35-7:05-9:10-9:40
Avatar (PG) No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 6:30-10 No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 3-6:30-10
Avatar 3D (PG) No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:40-4:15-8-9:30 No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12-12:40-3:40-4:15-8-9:30
The Blind Side (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:55-7:05-10:10 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:25-3:55-7:05-10:10
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:35-6:40-9:50 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 12:55-3:35-6:40-9:50 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 12:55-3:35-6:40-9:50
Disney's A Christmas Carol (PG) Stadium Seating, SR Dolby Digital Fri 4:25-6:55 Stadium Seating, SR Dolby Digital Sat-Thu 12:15-3:10-6:55
Invictus (STC) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 4:10-7:10-10 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:10-10
It's Complicated (14A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 4-7:15-10:20 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:10-4-7:15-10:20
Nine (PG) No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:45-7:10-10:05 No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:45-3:45-7:10-10:05
The Princess and the Frog (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:50-6:45-9:15 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:20-3:50-6:45-9:15
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:30-4:05-6:50-7:20-9:45-10:15 No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:30-1-3:30-4:05-6:50-7:20-9:45-10:15
The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 4:20-7:25-10:10 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:20-3:55-7:05-10:10
Up in the Air (14A) No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:50-7-9:55 No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:05-3:50-7-9:55

EMPIRE STUDIO 10 MACLEOD TRAIL
100-16061 MacLeod Trail, 403-974-0470

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:30-4:30-7:15-9:30 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 11:30-1-2-3:30-4:30-7:15-9:30
Avatar 3D (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 4-6:30-8-10:15 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 12-2:30-4-6:30-8-10:15 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 12-2:30-4-6:30-8-10:15
The Blind Side (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 6:45-9:50
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 4:40-7:20-10:10 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 1:45-4:40-7:20-10:10 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 1:45-4:40-7:20-10:10
Invictus (STC) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:20-6:40-9:40 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:15-3:20-6:40-9:40
It's Complicated (14A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:40-7:10-10 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:45-3:40-7:10-10
The Princess and the Frog (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 4:10-6:50-9:15 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:30-4:10-6:50-9:15
Sherlock Holmes (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:45-7:10:30 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:30-3:45-7:10:30
Up in the Air (14A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 4:20-7:30-10:20 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 1:15-4:20-7:30-10:20

GLOBE CINEMA
617-8 Avenue, 403-262-3308

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus (PG) Sat-Sun 1-3:20-7-9:20 Mon-Wed 3:45-7-9:20 Thu 3:45-7
Invictus (STC) Sat-Sun 12:45-3:15-6:45-9:15 Mon-Wed 4-6:45-9:15 Thu 4-6:45
No Films Showing Today (STC) Fri

MOVIEDOME
1039 999 36 St. N.E., 403-248-2000

3 Idiots (PG) Fri-Thu 2-4-6:30-7:30-8:30
Astro Boy (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4:05
Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs (G) Fri-Thu 12:50-3:45-6:40
Couples Retreat (PG) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:40-6:45-9:40
The Fourth Kind (14A) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:55-7-9:55
Law Abiding Citizen (18A) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:35-6:50-9:45
Paranormal Activity (14A) Fri-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:05-10
Pirate Radio (14A) Fri-Thu 12:55-9:35
The Stepfather (14A) Fri-Thu 1:05-3:50-6:55-9:50

SCOTIABANK CHINOOK
6455 MacLeod Trail, 403-212-8994

2012 (PG) Fri-Thu 6:45-10:20
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) No Passes Fri-Thu 11:40-1-2-3:45-4:30-7:10-9:40
Avatar 3D (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 11:30-12:15-3:10-4-6:45-7:40-10:25-11:10
Avatar: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 11:45-3:15-7:10:30
The Blind Side (PG) Fri-Thu 10:10
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Fri-Thu 11:50-2:20-5-8-10:40
Disney's A Christmas Carol 3D (PG) Fri-Thu 12-2:30-5-7:30-10
The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-4:15-7:25-10:30
Invictus (STC) Fri-Thu 12:20-3:40-7:05
It's Complicated (14A) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:50-4-7:15-10:15
Nine (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 1-4-7:15-10:15
The Princess and the Frog (G) Fri-Thu 11:50-2:15-4:55-7:20-10
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:10-3:15-6:50-10:05 No Passes Fri-Thu 1:15-4:25-7:30-10:40
The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG) Fri-Thu 12:30-3:30-7:10:05
Up in the Air (14A) No Passes Fri-Thu 1:10-4:10-7:10-10:20
The Young Victoria (PG) Fri-Thu 1:15-4:15-7:20-10:25

PLAZA THEATRE
1133 Kensington Rd. N.W., 403-283-3636

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs (G) Sat 12:50 Tue 12:50 Thu 5:25
Dead Walkers (STC) Thu 7
Facing Ali (STC) Sat 7
Five Hole: Tales of Hockey Erotica (STC) Sat 2:30-9 Sun 2:30-7-9 Mon-Wed 7-9 Thu 2:30
The Hurt Locker (14A) Mon 4:30 Tue 2:45 Wed 4:30
Monty Python and the Holy Grail (14A) Sun 4:30
Moon (14A) Mon 2:30 Tue 5:10 Wed 2:30
New York, I Love You (14A) Sat 2:30-9 Sun 2:30-7-9 Mon-Wed 7-9 Thu 2:30
No Films Showing Today (STC) Fri
Where the Wild Things Are (PG) Mon 12:30 Wed-Thu 12:30
The Wizard of Oz (STC) Sun 12:30
Zombieland (18A) Thu 7

SUNRIDGE SPECTRUM
2555 32nd Street, 403-717-1200

2012 (PG) Fri-Thu 10:05
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) No Passes Fri-Thu 11:50-12:20-2:30-3:30-5-6:30-7:40-9:10
Avatar 3D (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 11:30-11:45-3-3:15-6:45-7-10:25-10:40
The Blind Side (PG) Fri-Thu 12:10-6:40
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Fri-Thu 12:35-3:35-7:05-9:50
Disney's A Christmas Carol (PG) Fri-Thu 12-2:40-5:10-7:35
Invictus (STC) Fri-Thu 3:20-9:55
It's Complicated (14A) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:40-3:55-7:10-10:10
Nine (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:25-3:25-7:15-10:15
Old Dogs (G) Fri-Thu 10:25
The Princess and the Frog (G) Fri-Thu 11:55-2:35-5:05-7:45-10:20
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:05-12:45-3:10-4-6:50-7:20-10-10:35
The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG) Fri-Thu 12:15-3:45-6:55-10:05
Up in the Air (14A) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:50-3:50-7:25-10:20

THE UPTOWN STAGE & SCREEN
612 8th Ave. S.W., 403-265-0120

Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans (18A) Sat-Wed 12:05-4:40-9:20 Thu 12:05-4:40
No Films Showing Today (STC) Fri
Red Cliff (14A) Sat-Wed 1-3:45-6:30-9:15 Thu 1-3:45
The Road (14A) Sat-Wed 2:15-7:10 Thu 2:15

WESTHILLS 10
165 Stewart Green, 403-246-5291

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) No Passes Fri 4:30-7:15-9:30 No Passes Sat-Thu 11:50-2:05-4:30-7:15-9:30
Avatar 3D (PG) No Passes Fri 3:10-4:20-6:45-8-10:20 No Passes Sat-Thu 11:40-12:40-3:10-4:20-6:45-8-10:20
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Fri 3-7:20-9:50 Sat-Thu 12:20-3-7:20-9:50
Invictus (STC) Fri 3:20-6:35-9:40 Sat-Thu 12:10-3:20-6:35-9:40
It's Complicated (14A) No Passes Fri 4:10-7:40-10:30 No Passes Sat-Thu 1:10-4:10-7:40-10:30
Nine (PG) No Passes Fri 3:50-6:55-9:55 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:50-3:50-6:55-9:55
The Princess and the Frog (G) Fri 4-7-9:20 Sat-Thu 1-4-7-9:20
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes Fri 3:30-7:05-10:05 No Passes Sat-Thu 12-3:30-7:05-10:05
Up in the Air (14A) No Passes Fri 3:40-7:30-10:15 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:30-3:40-7:30-10:15

After much anticipation, Avatar was released last week to a strong box office response.

Court blocks Boy George appearance
A British court has blocked an attempt by former Culture Club singer Boy George to appear on a reality television show.
The 48-year-old had hoped to appear on Channel 4's ``Celebrity Big Brother'' despite being on probation for assaulting a male escort. THE ASSOCIATED PRESSS

Metro picks Canada's best in music

GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM
for Metro Canada

This list should probably include albums like The Fame Monster by Lady Gaga (even if her tracks sounds like ABBA retreads, it's about time somebody injected shock back into pop) and Blueprint 3 by Jay-Z (Empire State of mind is classy stuff, Yankees' fan or not). But it won't. There's always enough worthy Canadian music to promote without having to venture south or overseas. So this list is entirely home grown.

Metro music reviewer Graham Rockingham picks The Arkells' Jackson Square as one of the best Canadian albums of the year.

1. THE ARKELLS, JACKSON SQUARE (DINE ALONE): This album was actually released late in 2008, but few paid attention until this year when the singles Oh the Boss is Coming and The Ballad of Hugo Chavez made the rock airways. This is an extraordinary debut album by the Hamilton-based band that merges catchy, high-energy hooks with intelligent lyrics. Tracks like Champagne Socialist and John Lennon in 67 leave the Arkells a cut above everyone else right now. And a year of steady touring has forged a fiery live act that will win over any audience.

2. ALEXISONFIRE, OLD CROWS/YOUNG CARDINALS (DINE ALONE): Alexisonfire had already demonstrated strong instrumental chops and a strong sense of lyrical purpose. All it needed was to tone down the screamo vocals and delve into their rock roots. They did all this and more on their fourth album. It all comes together on tracks like The Northern, where the band incorporates the gospel standard Roll Jordan Roll into the chorus, and Emerald Street, where George Pettit shows a journalist's eye for composition

3. LEE HARVEY OSMOND, QUIET EVIL (LATENT): A collective effort that with representation from the Cowboy Junkies, the Skydiggers, Junkhouse that sprang from a Michael Timmins project to musically chronicle the assassination of JFK. The group accomplishes the task in brilliant form in the track, Parkland, named after the Dallas hospital in which the president was pronounced dead. Frontman Tom Wilson describes this deeply dark, sometimes frightening, music as "acid folk." It fits.

4. METRIC, FANTASIES (METRIC MUSIC): This album would make the list simply for asking the "would you rather be The Beatles or the Rolling Stones?" But there are 10 solid tracks on this album, including Help I'm Alive. Emily Haines' songwriting keeps getting stronger. It's difficult to understand how this album didn't win the Polaris Prize. Metric, it seems, has become too popular for the indie-addled judges

5. TRAGICALLY HIP, WE ARE THE SAME (UNIVERSAL): We should never take this band for granted. After more than 20 years of recording the truest form of Canadian rock in existence, the Hip pulls together one of their most ambitious projects to date. And all of the tracks on this release fit in comfortably with the rest of the band's incredible catalogue.

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada

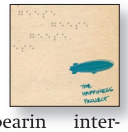
With just a couple weeks left in the year, every music fan is likely busy compiling a list of the decade's best records. But we can't forget how good 2009 has been. There was Sonic Youth's infectious The Eternal, La Roux's electro pop debut, Grizzly Bear's harmony laden folk on Veckatimst and the list goes on. But five Canadian records really stood out. Not only are these better than much of the international albums that hit shelves, but they've outshone all of the incredible talent coming out of the Great White North.

1. JOEL PLASKETT THREE (MAPLEMUSIC/UNIVERSAL): This seminal East Coast rocker has created a lot of good music over the years, but Three is easily his most ambitious effort yet. It should have been a mess — a triple disc, 27-song effort has a lot of potential to go wrong — but nearly every track here is as inspiring as the next. Partnering with Rose Cousins and Ana Egge, who provided stunning harmonies, was genius, while the infectious folk melodies are classic Plaskett.

2. ALEXISONFIRE, OLD CROWS/YOUNG CARDINALS (DINE ALONE): I've never liked Alexisonfire. Their aggressive yells and uneven songwriting didn't do much for me — that is until I heard their fourth disc Old Crows/Young Cardinals. On this record the group has, without question, found their voice. They've discovered the perfect balance between George Pettit's loud, guttural yells and Dallas Green's soaring melodic vocals. The songs are incredibly contagious, especially single Young Cardinals.

Metro music reviewer Bryan Borzykowski picks Joel Plaskett's Three as one of the best Canadian albums of the year.

3. CHARLES SPEARIN THE HAPPINESS PROJECT (ARTS & CRAFTS/EMI): You know Charles Spearin as the multi-instrumentalist from Do May Say Think and Broken Social Scene, but the artist's most inventive work has to be The Happiness Project. On this record, Spearin interviewed people from his community and set their words to sounds. Horn blasts follow a woman's natural talking melodies on the track Mrs. Morris, while a jazz band plays around with a little girl's words on Vittoria. It's experimental and accessible, but better yet it's passionate, inspiring and a beautiful ode to Spearin's neighbourhood.



4. HANDSOME FURS FACE CONTROL (SUB POP/OUTSIDE): Wolf Parade is one of the more popular indie acts to come out of Canada, but it's the members' side projects that should be front and centre. Handsome Furs is the brainchild of Wolf Parade's guitarist Dan Boeckner and his wife Alexei Perry — and the buzz is definitely competing with his other group. The duo's second disc is a gorgeous collection of gritty synth-heavy rock.

5. K'NAAN TROUBADOR (A&M/UNIVERSAL): Canadians have known about K'naan — the Somalia-born, Toronto-based rapper — since his fantastic debut in 2006. But, it was this year that the rest of the world finally discovered Keinan Abdi Warsame. That's thanks to his incredible sophomore record Troubador — which blends hip-hop, rock, R&B and everything else. It's filled with catchy hooks, but it's the subject matter on songs like Fatima, about a girl he knew in Africa, that makes this a memorable effort.

Rapper T.I. released from jail

T.I. has been released from prison in Arkansas and is being moved to a halfway house in Georgia, The Associated Press reports. The rapper, whose real name is Clifford Harris Jr., was released from jail Tuesday. TVGUIDE.COM

The presents you didn't get

Suggestions on how to spend all your hard-earned holiday cash

SoundCheck

Call it Black Saturday. Armed with the Christmas cash found under the tree, many millions of Canadians will lose their minds on Boxing Day in a shopping frenzy as they rush out to purchase all the stuff they really wanted for the holidays. Sure, we could save this money — hey, the RRSP deadline is just over two months away — but what's the fun in that? Here are some suggestions:

A Good CD Box Set: Virtually any song ever recorded is just a mouse click away, but you can't download the kind of goodness that you get in a carefully-compiled box set. If your budget affords it, it's almost always better to go with the deluxe edition.

Recommendations: AC/DC's Backtracks (Standard: $40, deluxe: $200); the recent Beatles re-releases (Go with the In Mono set over the stereo collection for the packaging alone. It's worth the $350 or so); and the Pixies Minotaur, which, at two feet tall, is one of the most ambitious — and expensive — rock boxes ever produced ($500 and up. Way up).

A New Deluxe Edition Re-release of an Old Album: If box set is on the dear side, why not opt for an expanded and enhanced version of an older record?

Recommendations: The Legacy edition of Pearl Jam's Ten (same remix/remaster but without all the extra pieces in the other versions: about $20), U2's Limited Edition Box Set of The Unforgettable Fire (a decent value at about $50).

Far left: AC/DC's Backtracks deluxe edition. Left: Pearl Jam's Ten (Deluxe edition).

A Turntable: This is what I'm shopping for today. I need a replacement for my venerable Akai belt-drive, which has served me well since the '70s. Turntables were an endangered species for a while, but with vinyl making such a comeback, they've risen from the dead.

Recommendations: A USB turntable like the ION Profile that can help you turn those old records into MP3s ($90 and up); a Technics SL-1200 series machine, the DJ's favourite and rumoured to be going out of production in 2010. ($700 and up. Make sure you shop around to get the best bang for your buck).

The Ongoing History Of New Music can be heard on stations across Canada. Read more at ongoinghistory.com and exploremusic.com

The names we really loved to hate this year

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Carrie Prejean. Levi Johnston. Octomom. If these names mean anything to you, chances are you've dragged your eyeballs across the cover of the celebrity tabloids during 2009. It's no reason to feel guilty — who could resist taking an interest in a mischievous headline like "Ashton Reveals Worst Part of Being Married to Demi." Admit it, you'd like to know.

Whether it's the nasty domestic squabble between singers Chris Brown and Rihanna to the extra-marital speculation about Tiger Woods, there's been no shortage of outrageous celebrity gossip in 2009.

"Gossip is immortal," said Lainey Lui, reporter on CTV's etalk. "I just think that it's a pastime that, through technology, has become ubiquitous." She should know. Lui runs the popular website laineygossip.com, which gets upwards of 200,000 unique visitors per week. She insists our celebrity fascination has everything to do with the pervasiveness of the Web: "(The Internet) has brought us closer to celebrities in a way we've never been able to be. It's as though we can't get close enough."

Jon Gosselin

Carrie Prejean

And with that, here are three nutty tabloid tales people loved in 2009:

JON & KATE — Whether it's the split-up reality TV couple's squabbles over cash or Jon's inability to spell, it seemed the Gosselins could make headlines even if Jon just ordered a bagel at Dunkin' Donuts.

CARRIE PREJEAN — The former Miss California may not have read "where it says you shouldn't get breast implants" in the Bible, but a lot of people sure read about the discovery of her sex tapes.

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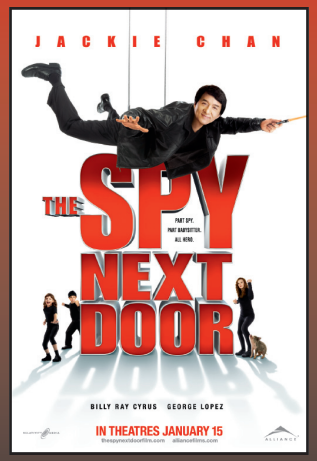

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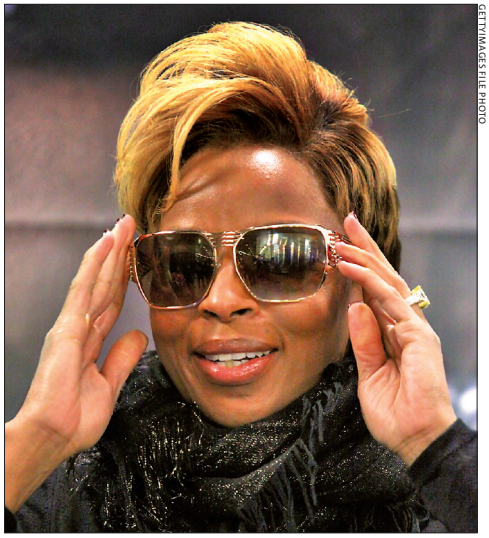
Y and R star's surrogate has baby
With the help of a surrogate, soap star Michelle Stafford has become a mom. The Young and the Restless star welcomed daughter Natalia Scout Lee on Monday, her rep tells People. **POPEATER.COM**


GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Mary J. Blige says performing her hits is like therapy.

Blige talks about being a crybaby

Mary J. Blige, who is known as the "queen of hip-hop soul," says she's kept her lofty title because she stays in tune with what younger audiences want to hear.

In a recent interview, Blige — who has won nine Grammy Awards since her debut in 1992 — talked about R&B music, recording a jazz album — and being a crybaby.

Q Would you say that you're a sensitive person?

A I would say that I'm a very sensitive person.

Q Are you crying about the same things that you cried about earlier in your career?

A I think I cry about different things now. I cry because I want to be better than this. I want to continue to grow so, you know, I have to give myself a break. I'm my worst critic. I'm the hardest person on me. I've been like that forever, but I've just learned to give myself a break so even now when I slip ... I don't want to hurt anyone. And I cry when I hurt people unintentionally.

Q How do you react when one of your songs is played on the radio?

A If I hear one of my old songs like Not Gon' Cry or My Life — the My Life album just always makes me stop and just cry, like just bawl. So call me a crybaby, whatever. I'm a woman, too, so sometimes it's just that time.

Q Is it hard to perform those emotional songs when, at this point, you're in a different place?

A For me performing Not Gon' Cry and I'm Goin' Down and My Life — it's like therapy again. I just love the way it makes me feel at the moment and get it out of my system, you know. Those are hurtful places and sometimes you got to revisit for the sake of other people.

Q How would you compare today's R&B music with the '90s music?

A Can I say '80s, too? There is no comparison because the music in the '90s and the '80s was just like, music. You had Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis who were on the radio. Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones everywhere, all over the place. Anita Baker, just so many amazing people. ... I'm not saying the music isn't beautiful now. It's just such a ... it's limited

Q How do you think your fashion style has evolved?

A I mean I've had some disasters, some trials, some errors, some disastrous hair moments and clothing moments, but that's due to the insecurity in me and not knowing what works for me.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cameron appeals to Chinese film industry

MOVIES Hollywood director James Cameron urged China to open its doors to more foreign films, arguing it would boost the local cinema industry after the WTO ruled Beijing was illegally restricting movie and other media imports.

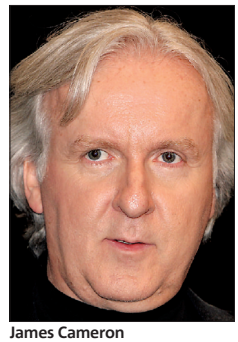
In Beijing to promote his latest sci-fi extravaganza, Avatar, Cameron said Wednesday that China's breakneck economic growth meant it no longer needed measures to protect its film industry.

"China's economy is expanding very, very rapidly. And I think the feeling right now is that perhaps it doesn't need to be protecting itself quite as much," Cameron, the director of blockbusters that include Terminator 2: Judgment Day and Titanic, told reporters. "Chinese filmmakers are very strong ... they're highly respected."

The Chinese government protects local films by limiting the number of film imports on a revenue-sharing basis to 20 a year, a quota that effectively limits Hollywood blockbusters to 20 slots annually.

These and other restrictions have been a key complaint by Western countries, who say that China's rapid rise as a trade power has been in part aided by unfair policies that boost sales of Chinese goods abroad while limiting imports into its market.

"I think that by opening the doors in China to other filmmakers, it will raise the entire film industry in China," Cameron said. "It will get people more excited, there will be more seats, more cinemas, more excitement about the cinema-going experience, which will also raise the Chinese filmmakers' ability to play their films."


GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

James Cameron

On Monday, a World Trade Organization panel upheld a ruling in a case brought by the U.S. government that China was obstructing trade by forcing foreign suppliers to distribute movies, music and books through state-owned companies.

China expressed disappointment at the decision but gave no immediate sign whether it could keep trying to defend the controls.

The WTO case focused on complaints by groups representing music labels such as EMI and Sony Music Entertainment, publishers including McGraw Hill and Simon&Schuster and Hollywood studios Warner Bros., Disney, Paramount, Universal and 20th Century Fox. The groups say the Chinese rules cost them tens of millions of dollars each year in lost business opportunities.

China's box office is booming, but still comparatively small compared to the U.S. market. Government statistics show that revenues surged from 920 million yuan in 2003 to 4.3 billion yuan ($630 million) in 2008 — compared to $9.8 billion in the U.S. last year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lewd messages land rapper conviction

COURTS A would-be rapper was convicted Tuesday of harassing Ashanti's mother with a flurry of dirty photos and lewd text messages about the Grammy Award-winning R&B star.

Devar Hurd shook his head as a Manhattan jury delivered its verdict after two days of deliberations, finding him guilty of stalking and aggravated harassment for messages the singer's mother called scary and disgusting.

Hurd, a sometime model and car salesman from Griffith, Indiana, said he thought the crude messages, photos of his genitals and a picture of the home where Ashanti's family lives were welcome.

The 31-year-old is being held without bail until his sentencing, set for Jan. 11. He faces up to two years in prison. His lawyer, Richard Verchick, left court without speaking to reporters and didn't immediately return a phone call afterward.

Ashanti's mother, Tina Douglas, told jurors she didn't know Hurd when he began calling her and leaving messages recounting bizarre and rambling sexual fantasies about the singer. Douglas manages her daughter's multiplatinum-selling career.

Douglas said she told Hurd to leave her alone but he went on to send dozens of revolting text messages and pictures.

"It was just disgusting and humiliating and extremely frightening," Douglas testified, adding that she pulled Ashanti out of a rehearsal of The Wiz after Hurd sent a message that mentioned seeing the singer's car outside the theatre.

Ashanti starred as Dorothy in an off-Broadway revival of the musical this summer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sarandon, Robbins split up

One of Hollywood's most enduring relationships has ended — Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins have broken up after more than two decades together. "Actress Susan Sarandon and her partner of 23 years, actor Tim Robbins have announced that they separated over the summer," her rep said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Usher's got style

Usher knows his stuff when it comes to fashion.

The R&B singer describes his style as "flashy classy" and he is known for seamlessly moving between three-piece banker suits and leather jackets. He admires edgier designers such as Rick Owens, Marc Jacobs and Kris Van Assche.

Usher has enough business savvy to say it's not the right time for him to launch his own label, but he is in New York to promote his new fragrance, Usher VIP, a follow-up to Usher He, which ranked in the top 40 of men's prestige fragrance sales this year, according to market data researcher NPD.

This is all moonlighting for him, though.

Musically, Usher had the No. 3 hip-hop song according to Nielsen/BDS with "Papers."

On this day Usher is in a luxurious hotel suite wearing a long blue cardigan sweater, dark jeans and black leather boots to answer fashion questions from The Associated Press:

Q What's the most important element of your look?

A It's about how you feel, not about 'fashion.' It's about healthy living, the combination of foods you eat … Those ancillaries are what lead you to 'fashion.' Fashion can be a beautiful scarf, soft cashmere sweater or cool boots.

Q Where do you find inspiration for your style?

A My taste develops the more I'm introduced to things, the more I travel and experience different lifestyles. I always go out and embrace where I am — I don't stay locked up in a hotel room. I am an eclectic spectator.

Q Why isn't there an Usher fashion label yet?

A I'm building a lifestyle brand and I'm not rushing to do clothes. I feel like I'm speaking to my customer now with the fragrances, and, in this economy and with my style and attention to detail, my clothes won't come cheap. It's not the right time.

Q What did you wear when you sang at President Obama's holiday concert earlier this month?

A I worked with the president's tailor. I wanted an edge but also to be appropriate and I wanted to be warm. The scarf I wore was attached to the jacket, which was cashmere and had waxed silver thread. I wore a slim pant that was dressy and well tailored — and I'm in good shape now so I didn't mind showing off a little. I wore black boots that were like spats with French buttons by Dsquared2. It was all new for the president.

Q What's with the beard?

A It keeps me warm. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CA	Vu	SC	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/24/09 primetime	267	351 - ACCESS	Women of Karaoun		Stargate Atlantis		*Santa Baby* (2006, Comedy) Jenny McCarthy, Ivan Sergei.				Women
	243	317 3 CFCN	Corner Gas	Degrassi: TNG	*It's a Wonderful Life* ★★★★ (1946, Comedy-Drama) James Stewart, Donna Reed. (DVS)						CTV News
	-	- 4 OMNI	Dynasty Lights	The Simpsons	A Thousand Words		A Thousand Miles to Freedom		Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Friends
	-	371 5 KXLY	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Prep- Landing	The Middle	Modern Family	Cougar Town	Grey's Anat.
	245	306 6 CBRT	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	*Miracle on 34th Street* ★★★★ (1947, Fantasy)				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	244	338 7 CICT	ET Canada	Entertainment	*The Road to Christmas* (2006, Comedy) Jennifer Grey.				Mall Santa		Your Town
	246	- 8 CKAL	Murdoch Mysteries		Glenn Martin	Glenn Martin	Scrubs	Better Off Ted	Modern Family	30 Rock	Your City
	119	705 9 CBXFT	*Sur les traces du Père Noël 2* ★★ (2002, Comédie) (SC)				Studio 12 (N) (SC)		Le Téléjournal Nouvelles. (SC)		La Messe de
	-	- 10 SHAW	(6) Local Programming						Local Programming		
	-	372 12 KREM	News	Access H.	The Doctors		CSI: NY "Greater Good"		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		The Mentalist
	-	374 14 KSPS	PBS NewsHour (N)		Faith Hill, Joy to the World		Christmas With Mormon		Christmas at St. Olaf		Michael
	502	390 15 CBC	CBC News: The National		Princesses of the World		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		Princesses
	-	370 16 KHQ	News	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel Fortune	*It's a Wonderful Life* ★★★★ (1946, Comedy-Drama), Donna Reed (DVS)				
	-	373 22 KAYU	The Office	Raymond	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones (HDTV PA)		Fringe (HDTV PA)		News
	297	652 37 WPIX	Supernatural (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men	Friends	Midnight Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral		
news	500	500 29 CNN	Larry King Live (N)		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)				Larry King Live		Cooper 360
	508	502 31 CNN2	The Joy Behar Show		Nancy Grace		Showbiz Tonight		The Joy Behar Show		Nancy Grace
sports	400	400 21 TSN	Sid le Kid vs. Alex le Grand		SportsCentre	SportsCentre: Year in Review	World Extreme Cagefighting Donald Cerrone vs. Ed Ratcliff.				
	408	418 27 net	Skiing: Alpine Ski Series		Olympics: Away From Home		Reflections The year in sports.		Plays of Year	UFC: Access	MMA Conn
	410	403 30 SCORE	Amazing Hits	Gerry Dee	Score Now		Top 50 Plays of the Year		Cabbie's Top	Court Cuts	Amazing Hits
	411	457 44 OLN	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters
	417	406 48 SPEED	(3) Barrett-Jackson Automobile Auction From Las Vegas.						Barrett-Jackson Automobile Auction		
family	552	543 20 YTV	The Nutcracker		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Mystery Hnt.	Mon. Warriors	Fries That?
	557	541 39 FAM	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School
	555	545 67 TOON	*Gotta Catch Santa Claus*		The Legend of Frosty the Snowman Ice skate.				Futurama	King of the Hill	*Batman Return*
cable variety	575	583 11 CMT	According-Jim	According-Jim	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Faith Hill, Joy to the World		Reba	Reba	According-Jim
	553	546 17 TREE	Little Bear	Toopy & Binoo	Horton Hears	Zigby Game.	Max & Ruby	Dragon (DVS)	Backyardigans	Ni Hao, Kai-lan	Go, Diego, Go!
	505	398 19 TWN	(5) EarthWatch One		EarthWatch One		EarthWatch Two				
	602	568 23 W	Maxed Out	Grocery Bag	*Silent Night* (2002, Drama) Linda Hamilton, Matthew Harbour.				*Me and Luke* (2006, Drama) Kristopher Turner.		
	521	560 24 TLC	World Chocolate		BBQ Pitmasters (HDTV)		Little Chocolatiers		World Chocolate		BBQ Pit
	603	561 25 FOOD	Guy's Disney Holiday		Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives		Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives		Diner, Drive-In	Diner, Drive-In	Diner, Drive-In
	615	520 26 A&E	The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		(10:01) The First 48		The First 48
	617	522 32 SHOW	*His and Her Christmas* (2005, Comedy-Drama)				*Christmas Caper* (2007, Comedy-Drama)				*Christmas*
	601	562 33 SLICE	X-Weighted		X-Weighted "Heather"		ET Canada	What Happen?	Work Out "In the Mud"		Brat Camp
	-	633 34 ENC2	Danish Poet	(7:20) *I'll Be Home for Christmas* (1988)			*Christmas Eve* ★★★ (1986, Drama)			*It Happened One Christmas*	
	520	505 35 DISC	Canada's Worst Driver		Canada's Worst Driver		Canada's Worst Driver		MythBusters		Dirty Jobs
	620	523 36 BRAVO	*The Man Who Saved Christmas* (2002, Docudrama)				Law & Order "Wager"		Without a Trace		*Wind at Back*
	294	650 40 WPCH	Law & Order: SVU		*The Mighty Ducks* ★★ (1992, Comedy) Emilio Estevez.				The Office	*The Mighty Ducks* (1992)	
	626	547 41 COM	Corner Gas	Jon Dore Show	Colbert Christmas: Gift		Name Is Earl	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Jeff Dunham
	-	539 42 TCM	*Remember*	(7:45) *Christmas in July* (1940, Comedy)			*Chicken Every Sunday* ★★★ (1949, Comedy) Dan Dailey.				*Meet-St. Louis*
	628	584 43 SPIKE	*Star Wars V: The Empire Strikes Back* ★★★★ (1980, Science Fiction) Mark Hamill.						*Star Wars VI: Return of the Jedi* ★★★ (1983)		
	522	516 45 HIST	Underworld Histories		Ice Road Truckers		Ancient Discoveries		Underworld Histories		After People
	627	528 46 SPACE	(7:05) *Star Wars: Episode III -- Revenge of the Sith* ★★★ (2005, Science Fiction)						*Star Wars: Episode I -- The Phantom Menace*		
	-	- 47 AMC	(6) *White Christmas* ★★★ (1954)				(8:45) *White Christmas* ★★★ (1954, Musical Comedy) Bing Crosby.				
	619	525 49 TROP	Bob & Doug	Bob & Doug	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	TV Made, Do It	Family Guy
	600	564 50 HGTV	Carter Comes Home		25 Great Holiday Ideas		A Very Merry Curb Appeal		Carter Can	Style	Deck-Holiday
	501	391 52 CTV	CTV News Tonight		CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News
	504	508 70 BNN	Squeeze Play		Business News	Commodities	Market Call Tonight		Headline	Commodities	Squeeze Play
	526	507 92 VIVA	The Closer "Dumb Luck"		Cold Case "Revenge"		Psychic Inv.	Ghostly Enc.	Judging Amy		Missing
	269	350 93 APTN	Don Burnstick Comedy		Wolf Canyon	Urban Indian	*True Heart* ★★ (1997, Adventure) Kirsten Dunst.				Fish Out
	-	- 94 MCP	World News	News	Sewing Maid	Kingdom-Wind	Vancouver	Shaktimaan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Connections
	571	581 100 MMM	(6) VH1 Divas		Entourage	Wild 'n Out	VH1 Divas				Entourage
	570	580 101 MM	*Paradise City: Degrassi Goes Hollywood* (2009, Drama)				Hottest Pop Videos		MuchNews: Top Shockers '09		Love Court
	581	566 102 MTV	Jersey Shore		Jersey Shore		MTV Live	MTV News	Real World-Road Rules		Jersey Shore
	-	- 116 TV5	Petits meurtres	*Drôle de Noël* Valérie Benguigui.			TV5 Le Journal		(9:35) *Figaro* (2008, Drame) Isabelle Adjani, Jacques Weber.		

critics'corner

Miracle on 34th Street

In this 1947 classic, Edmund Gwenn stars as a Macy's Santa who gets into trouble when he claims he's the real Kriss Kringle. In a city full of impostors, he finds no one — not even a little girl (Natalie Wood) — willing to believe in him. With skeptics ridiculing him at every turn, Kringle has no choice but to take his case to court. Only one young lawyer has enough faith to defend him. Maureen O'Hara and John Payne also star in the Academy Award winner. 8 PM on CBRT

It's a Wonderful Life

You know the story: Small-town guy George Bailey defers one big dream after another to stay home, marry local girl and run family business. Facing financial ruin, he's pulled from suicidal despair by an angel who shows him what a terrible place the world would be if he'd never lived. Hey, his small life made a pretty big impact after all! James Stewart, Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore star, with Henry Travers as the angel whose work with George earns him a promotion. 8 PM on CFCN

Jacko doc returns as cameras roll

DOCUMENTARY When Michael Jackson's embattled personal physician returned to work last month, cameras were rolling.

Miranda Sevcik, a spokeswoman for Dr. Conrad Murray, confirms that a British documentary crew chronicled his first day back at a Houston clinic for the poor. Murray returned to the clinic Nov. 23 and was greeted by several patients and his pastor. Murray remains under investigation for his role in Jackson's June 25 death. No charges have been filed, but investigators are looking into whether Murray improperly administered the pop superstar the powerful anesthetic propofol. Details of the project were first reported by celebrity website TMZ. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In brief

SURGERY France's top rocker and entertainment icon Johnny Hallyday has left a Los Angeles hospital after riveting France for some two weeks of hospitalization for back surgery. An infection was discovered.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gift Pack
For $99, you can give that special someone two tickets to a Theatre Junction show, and a $40 gift certificate to the Velvet restaurant in the Grand (608 1st St. S.W.) ANDREE LAU

Urban Foodie

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Should auld acquaintance be forgot

ANDREE LAU
CalgaryUrbanFoodie@gmail.com

Robbie Stewart's Sports Pub
102-10th St. N.W., Calgary

Signature dish: Haggis balls
Rating: ●●½
Dinner & drinks for 2: $38

The corner of 10th Street and Memorial Drive may be cursed. In the last three years alone, three different restaurants have come and gone.

It appears this hex does not discriminate. The Verve restaurant and martini bar was fancy, high price points; Ten Scene Cuisine was international fusion plates in a glossy lounge; latest victim Robbie Stewarts was a sports pub.

Opened just months ago in May, the pub seemed to prosper this summer with a regularly full Memorial-facing patio. Its menu, featuring Scottish items, seemed unique enough to stand out from all the other Kensington pubs.

A clan platter ($24.95) was piled high with goodies, including chicken marinated in an Indian tikka sauce then deep fried, salted cod fish mixed with Scotch bonnet peppers then deep fried, and haggis rolled into balls then deep fried. Scottish burger pockets, stuffed with seasoned ground beef, were dry and bland, and not deep fried. Wings, dry ribs and burgers meanwhile were pretty standard pub quality.

As we say goodbye to Robbie Stewarts and 2009, my best to the people who gave it a go.

On the web

- Get recipes and more great food content at metronews.ca/recipes

ANDREE LAU PHOTOS

Top: Scottish burger pockets, stuffed with seasoned ground beef. Bottom: Clan platter from the now defunct Robbie Stewarts.

Global Peasant blog online

- Travel along with Diane Thompson's culinary adventures in her Global Peasant blog.
- Check out metronews.ca/globalpeasant for a recipe of Brown Rice Salmon Sushi!

Dining out

NEW YEAR'S EVE Ring in the new year at Rush (207-9th Ave. S.W.), named one of Canada's top new restaurants. Two seatings ($75/$120) followed by the house DJ in the lounge.
- The Selkirk Grille at Heritage Park (403-268-8500) also has two seatings on Dec. 31 for a five-course dinner ($85) with optional wine pairings ($45).

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Calgary Place
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Chinook
Cross Iron Mills
Crowfoot Crossing
Deerfoot Meadows
Eaton Centre
Eau Claire
Kensington
Marda Loop
Market Mall
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Hudson may become a mother once again
Jennifer Hudson is pregnant with her second child just four months after giving birth to baby son David Jr., according to U.S. tabloid reports. She and her fiancé David Otunga discovered the happy news on Dec. 10, according to Star magazine. METRO WORLD NEWS

Celebrity Buzz

Winehouse tantrum infuriates dad

OH AMY, AMY, AMY Mitch Winehouse is furious with Amy over her alleged theatre attack, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The 58-year-old taxi driver is very unhappy with his daughter, who was hauled into Bethnal Green police station in London yesterday to be questioned about the incident at a pantomime — a traditional musical comedy production, typically performed around Christmas — in Milton Keynes last week.

A source said: "I've never seen Mitch this angry, he is seething. He can't believe Amy would act so stupidly."

The 26-year-old singer reportedly shocked theatregoers when she hurled abuse at the cast of Cinderella, allegedly kicked and punched the front of house manager, and spent more than half an hour of the first act yelling expletives.

Winehouse — who was thought to have been drinking — was eventually dragged out of the theatre by her security staff. Mitch blames Blake Fielder-Civil, the singer's ex-husband who she recently reconciled with, for her wild behaviour

A source told the Daily Star newspaper: "Her dad thinks her current behaviour is due to spending time with Blake again.

"After just one day in Blake's presence, Amy reverted back to her wild ways. Amy had really changed over the last few months and was getting her life back on track."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Murphy's death raises drug speculations

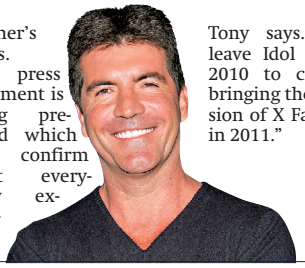
THE PLOT THICKENS As the details of Brittany Murphy's are sorted out, some doctors are speculating that a combination of prescription drugs was behind the actress' heart attack earlier this week. "When you have a 32-year-old person dying suddenly, and especially a celebrity in Los Angeles, you can place your bet down that it's going prove to be a case of acute combined drug toxicity," Dr. Cyril Wecht tells the CBS Early Show. Meanwhile, Murphy's husband, Simon Monjack, was apparently left out of her will, as she wrote it before they were married, according to E! News. "She left everything to her mother," a source says.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Cowell set to bid Idol farewell?

NOW THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN WON'T GET THE CHANCE TO HAVE THEIR DREAMS CRUSHED Simon Cowell is set to leave American Idol behind, if his loose-lipped brother has anything to say about it. Tony Cowell, who produces a podcast called The Cowell Factor, recently dished on his brother's plans.

"A press statement is being prepared which will confirm what everybody expected," Tony says. "Simon will leave Idol at the end of 2010 to concentrate on bringing the American version of X Factor to U.S. TV in 2011."



METRO WORLD NEWS

Kendra excited to make holidays special for baby

INTERESTING HOUSEHOLD Kendra Wilkinson can't wait to start her own "family traditions" now she is a wife and mother, femalefirst.co.uk says.

The reality TV star and former Playboy playmate is gearing up for the festive season and hopes to make the holiday as wonderful for her husband Hank Baskett and newborn son Henry Randall Baskett IV as her mother did when she was younger.

Kendra, 24, tweeted: "I can't wait to start my own family traditions and I'm so excited to make every Christmas memorable for little Hank like my mom did for me!"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Beyonce and Jay-Z try on each other's names

SAY MY NAME... OK, AND HIS NAME TOO Beyonce Knowles and Jay-Z are to change their names, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The couple, who married in April 2008, are to take on both of their respective surnames in order to keep the singer's parental line from dying out.

Jay-Z — whose real name is Shawn Carter — will now be known as Shawn Knowles-Carter, while Beyonce is to become Beyonce Knowles-Carter.

A source told the Daily Star newspaper: "They want to keep Knowles because Beyonce's parents didn't have any sons and they're keen to keep the name going strong, especially if they don't produce any children themselves."

Earlier this week, the Knowles family suffered a blow when it was announced that Beyonce's parents Tina and Mathew would be divorcing after 29 years of marriage.

In October, rumours surfaced that Mathew may have been unfaithful, with a paternity suit filed by Alexandra Wright claiming he was the father of her unborn child — an allegation he has denied.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jake mourns broken heart with guy pals

FAKE RELATIONSHIP BLUES Jake Gyllenhaal is licking his wounds after his split from Reese Witherspoon by reportedly vacationing with pals at the Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur, Calif., the very spot he planned to propose to his ex, according to Popeater.

"It's so sad watching his friends try to cheer him up in the infinity pool when you know it was Reese that was supposed to be next to him wearing a diamond ring," a source says.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Celebrity tweets

Sean Combs keeps it clean, Stephen Fry is disconnecting for the holidays, and Diablo Cody knows how to keep herself motivated.

• @iamddiddy Takin a bath. Its a nightly ritual! Its like getting baptized!!!

• @stephenfry Far away from London now. Christmas has started. No phone reception. Hesitant internet. Cut off from the world for a week. Makes me happy.

• @diablocody I listen to "Maniac" from Flashdance all the time. It makes me type really fast

METRO WORLD NEWS

DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

HEALTH CARE — Massage Therapy | Medical Office Administrator ☆ | Retail Pharmacy Technician ☆ | Medical Administrative Assistant

TECHNOLOGY — Network and Internet Security Specialist | Help Desk Support Analyst

BUSINESS & LEGAL — Paralegal ☆ | Business Administration E-Commerce Management ☆ | Accounting and Payroll Administrator ☆ | Professional Legal Assistant | Oil & Gas Administrative Assistant ☆ | Computer Graphic Design ☆ | Business Administration Management ☆

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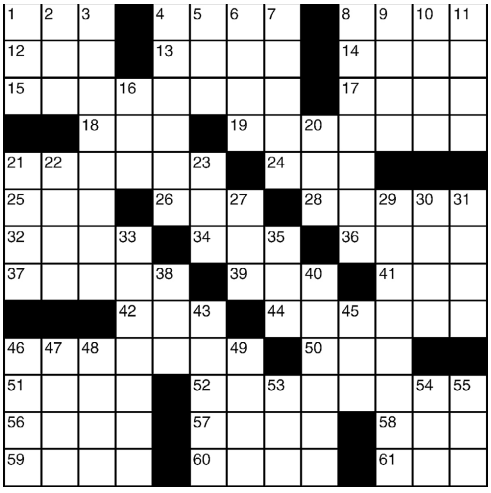
Friday Sunny -5 C / -20 C
Saturday Sunny -2 C / -14 C

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Andrew Schultz, Meteorologist – Breakfast Television
"I get to spread the word on how your day, evening or weekend will shape up with our ever-changing weather here in Alberta." **WEEKDAYS AT 6 A.M.**

Take Five



Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

9			6					
4		5		3	7			8
	3	2	1					
						5	3	
5		3				7		6
	2	9						
					4	6	2	
7			3	9		1		5
					5			4

ACROSS

1 Org. that caught Dillinger
4 Carpet type
8 Criticism
12 Bradstreet partner
13 Franc replacement
14 Lasso
15 Helped
17 Do as you're told
18 Greek mountain
19 Cunning
21 Buxom
24 Nevertheless
25 Illustrations
26 Conger, e.g.
28 Bottom point
32 On in years
34 Victory
36 — Strauss jeans
37 Groucho's "tattooed lady"
39 .Spacecraft compartment
41 Enervate
42 Energy
44 Kind of inspiration
46 Do anew
50 Petrol
51 Finished
52 Withstood
56 Catchall abbr.
57 Pace
58 Blunder
59 Otherwise
60 Small salamanders
61 Rotation duration

DOWN

1 Med. watchdog grp.
2 Clear the tables
3 Put one's foot down
4 Elmo's street
5 Shack
6 Belligerent Olympian
7 Devout
8 Direct, as an attack
9 Earring site
10 Tarzan's clique
11 Singer Alicia
16 Altar affirmative
20 Longing
21 Canaanite idol
22 Excessive revelry
23 Evergreen type
27 Back talk
29 Stopped
30 Terrible guy?
31 Mature
33 Tie breaker?
35 Affirmative action
38 Help
40 0 through 9
43 Combine
45 Anatomical duct
46 "When in —, ..."
47 Satan's specialty
48 Disarray
49 Canadian flag symbol
53 Perch
54 Historic time
55 Parched

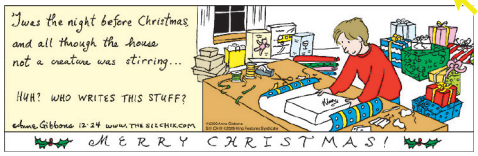
PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

C	O	D		A	V	I	D		G	A	S	P		
A	B	A		N	I	N	E		A	P	S	E		
H	I	S		N	A	N	C	Y	D	R	E	W		
N	E	H	R	U			K	E	G					
			A	L	A	S		S	E	R	U	M		
D	R	E	W	U	P	O	N		T	O	R	E		
R	A	G		S	P	R	E	E		A	G	O		
A	T	O	M		S	T	A	N	D	R	E	W		
B	A	S	I	S		A	R	C	O					
			D	A	B			R	O	A	S	T		
D	R	E	W	C	A	R	E	Y		B	A	H		
I	O	T	A		W	I	M	P		U	S	E		
S	W	A	Y		L	O	U	T		T	H	Y		

1	4	5	9	6	8	3	7	2
3	7	9	1	2	5	4	6	8
2	6	8	3	7	4	1	9	5
7	9	2	5	4	3	6	8	1
5	8	4	6	1	2	7	3	9
6	3	1	8	9	7	5	2	4
9	2	6	7	5	1	8	4	3
4	5	3	2	8	6	9	1	7
8	1	7	4	3	9	2	5	6

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca



Metro Recipe of the Day

Lemon Garlic Mussels

Submitted by:
Tammy Roy, St. Thomas, ON

INGREDIENTS:
-2 Tablespoon olive oil
-1 Cup vidalia onion diced
-1 chili pepper, sliced in half
-1 bay leaf
-8 Clove garlic, minced
-1 Tablespoon fresh parsley
-1 Tablespoon tarragon, rough chopped
-1 Tablespoon oregano, rough chopped
-1 Tablespoon thyme, rough chopped
-1 lemon, juice of
-1/2 Cup white wine
-2 1/2 Pound mussels, scrubbed and discard any that are not alive
-3 Tablespoon butter
-fresh herbs (to garnish)
-sliced lemon (to garnish)

METHOD:
1. Pour olive oil to cover bottom of a large pan.
2. Add onions, chili pepper and garlic - saute until translucent.
3. Add herbs, lemon and wine.
4. Add mussels - cover and steam for 5 minutes until all are opened.
5. Remove mussels to a large bowl.
6. Keeping the juice in the pan, whisk in the butter and pour over the mussels.
7. Garnish with herbs and lemon.

SERVES 4
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Just because it's the holiday season does not mean you should give up on your efforts to impress employers and other important people.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
With Pluto power on your side there is nothing you cannot do or possess. The only danger is you might be a bit too imperious and turn off people.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Look in the mirror and be honest about what you see. Everyone has faults, but not everyone has the ability to recognize them.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
It may be the case that you are expected to do something today that goes against the grain, that compromises your values. Value your principles.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
The planets indicate you have been working too hard and need a rest, but you are unlikely to get one until you change your attitude.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't waste time worrying that what you are planning may not be possible, just get on and do it and before you know it you'll be flying.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
You will have to deal with someone you would prefer to avoid, someone whose attitude you find difficult to take.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
You will be extraordinarily generous today but make sure it is only your friends who benefit from your munificence.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
You don't have to ask anyone's permission to make the major changes that you desire. On the contrary, they'll work out if you seize the initiative

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
Your confidence will go through the roof between now and the new year. You'll feel as if you could take on the world and win – and you can.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
It's okay to be secretive, especially if what you are planning has the potential to upset those you live or work with.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Take the initiative in group activities and don't be afraid to tell others what they have been doing wrong.

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